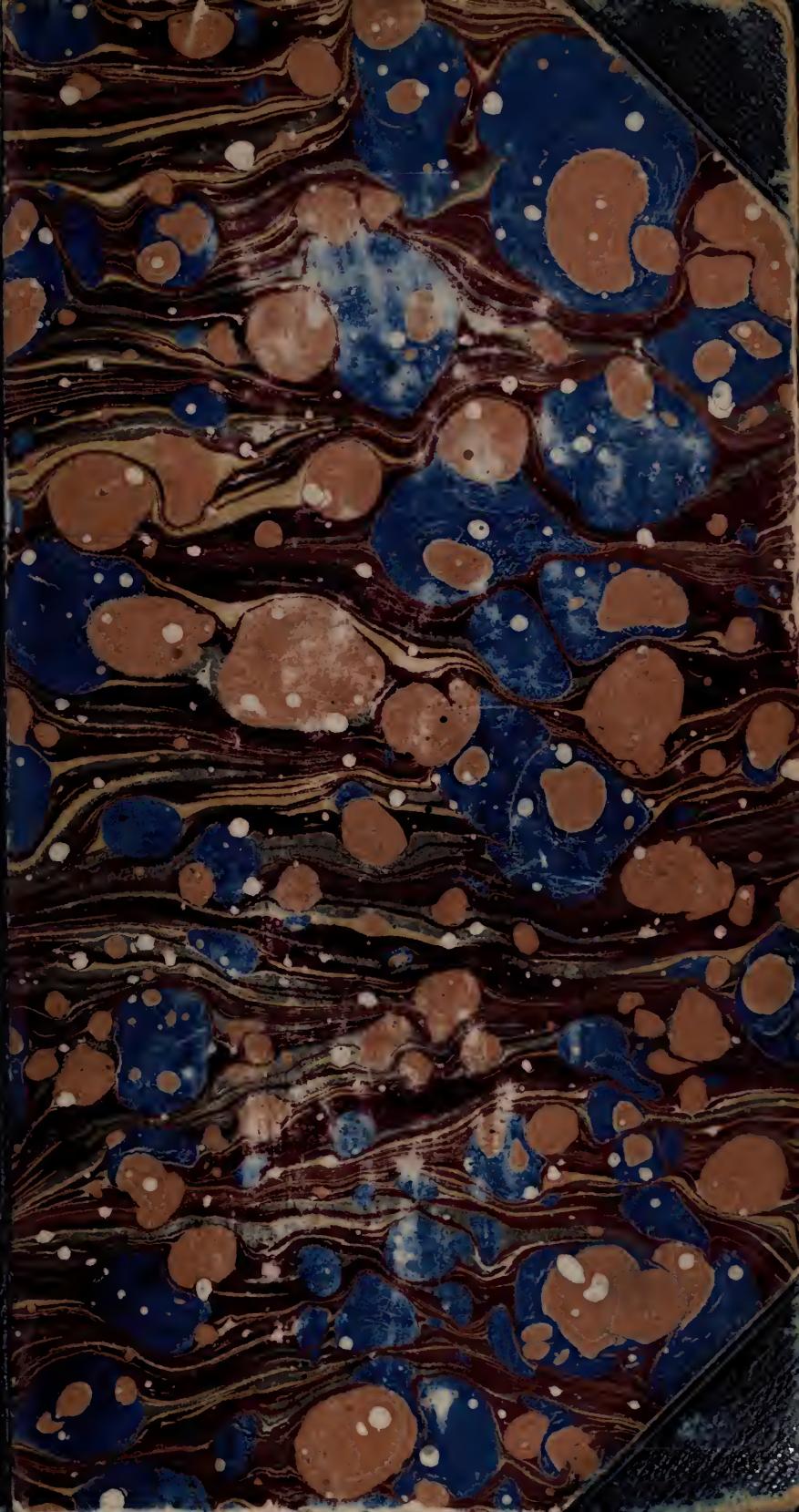


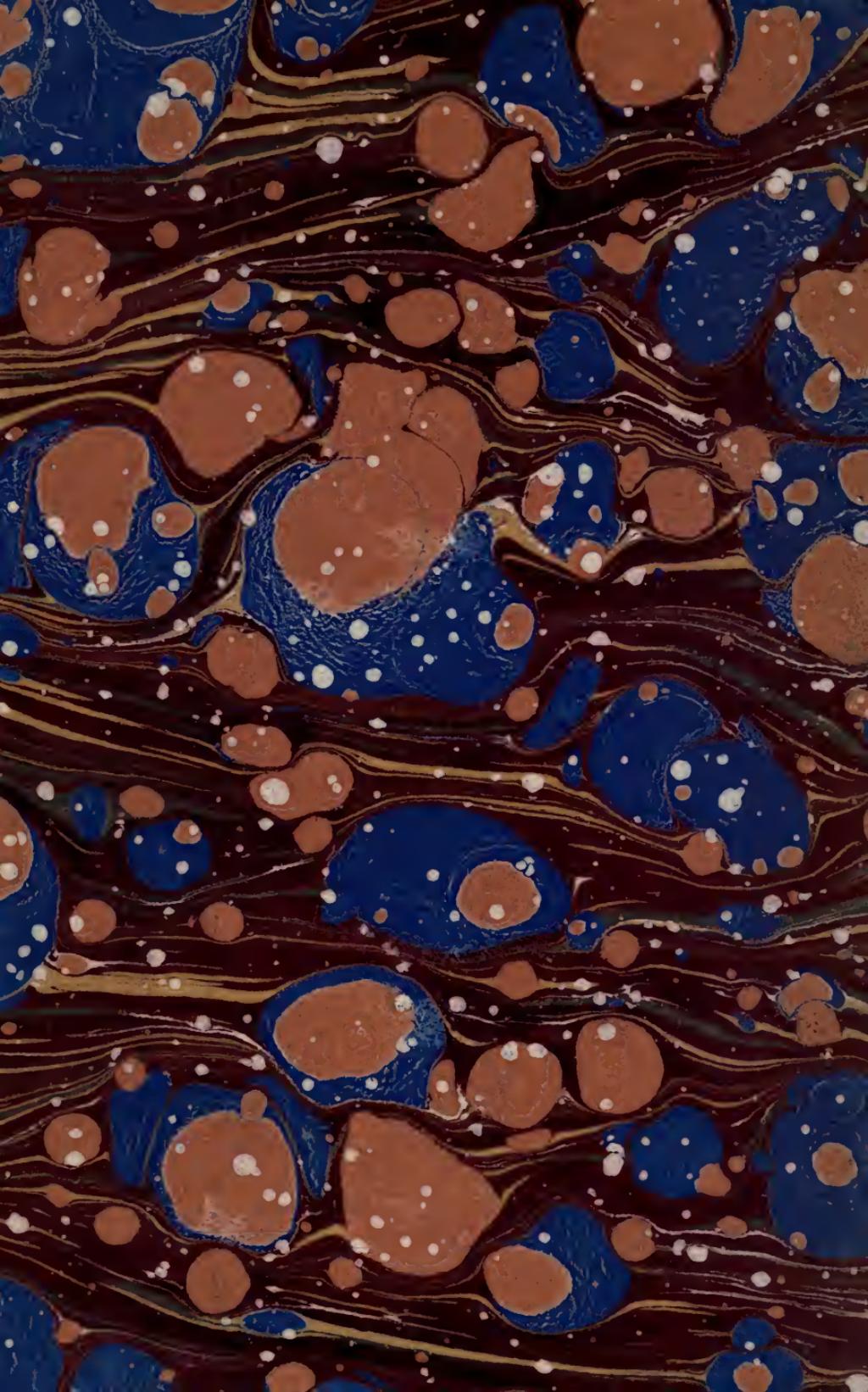
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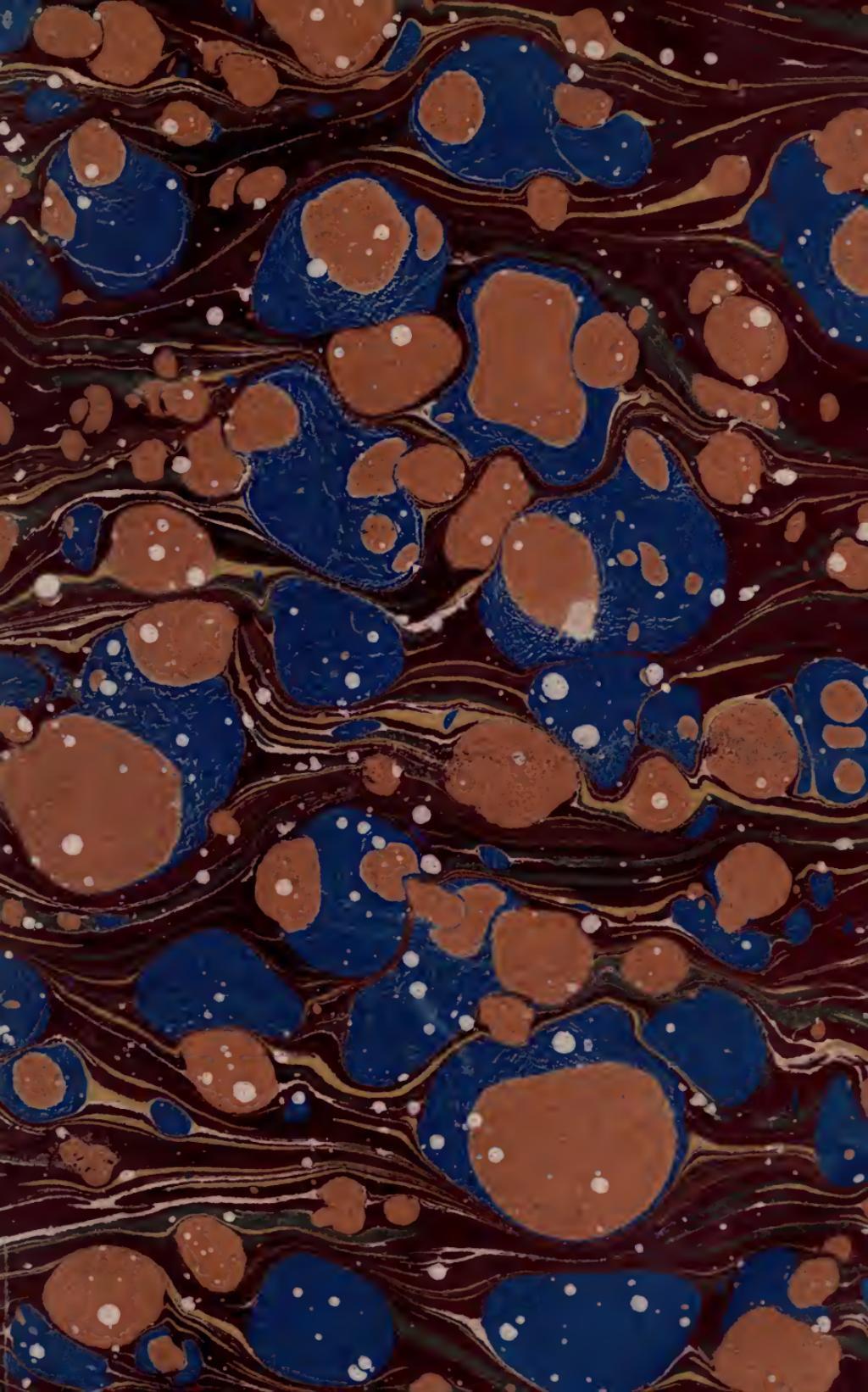


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THE
IMAGE-WORSHIP
OF
THE CHURCH OF ROME
PROVED TO BE
CONTRARY TO HOLY SCRIPTURE,
AND THE
Faith and Discipline of the Primitive Church,
AND TO INVOLVE
CONTRADICTORY AND IRRECONCILABLE DOCTRINES WITHIN
THE CHURCH OF ROME ITSELF.

BY J. ENDELL TYLER, B.D.,
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L O N D O N :
FRANCIS & JOHN RIVINGTON,
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1847.

1st Ed



TO THE
RIGHT REVEREND EDWARD COPLESTON, D.D.,
LORD BISHOP OF LLANDAFF.

MY DEAR LORD,

THE uninterrupted enjoyment of your friendship through nearly forty years would of itself suggest an adequate reason for my desire to dedicate this volume to you, in testimony of my gratitude, affection, and reverence. Had we, however, been comparatively strangers to each other, still, in publishing a work designed, under God's blessing, to be instrumental in vindicating the purity of His worship, I might naturally have sought thus to associate myself with one whose eminent abilities and attainments have been in large measure, and with signal success, devoted to the same holy cause.

That you may for many years continue to witness the increasing fruits of that devotedness, not only in the diocese which has been so long blessed with your guidance, but also in the Church at large, is the prayer of

Your Lordship's faithful Friend and Servant,

J. ENDELL TYLER.

18, Bedford Square,
October 10, 1847.

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P R E F A C E.

SECTION I.

THE publication of the present work originated in a conviction, that the merciful and wise designs of Providence can never be fully effectual for the conversion and sanctification of fallen and ruined man, so long as the inventions of superstition continue to impede the progress of Christianity by deforming and adulterating primitive truth; and that nothing has adulterated it more than the adoption of Images in the Church as objects of Religious Veneration and Worship.

In the following pages it will be shewn, that, in the same manner as heathens and pagans worshipped their idols, before the light of the Gospel shone upon the world, worship is now paid in the Church of Rome to the visible representations of our Lord, of the Virgin Mary, and of those whom that Church numbers in the catalogue of her saints. And the distinction attempted to be established between Idol-worship and Image-worship will be shewn to be altogether imaginary.*

It will be also demonstrated, that, so far is it from being true that the religious veneration of images is sanctioned by Holy Scripture, or was countenanced by

* Vide inf., p. 47.

the Primitive Church, that it is directly opposed to the entire spirit of both the Old and the New Testament,* and was never heard of in the Church, till long after five centuries had elapsed from the foundation of Christianity, nor ever established, till the closing years of the eighth century.†

While, moreover, the most celebrated doctors and canonised saints of the Church of Rome, since that time, will be found to have maintained it to be the duty of Christians to offer to the visible image of Christ and to the material cross the selfsame adoration and divine worship which they pay to Christ Himself,‡ it will be here shewn that this teaching is in agreement with the authorised and enjoined services and ritual of the Roman Church,§ and that corresponding fruits not only were produced in times past, but even at the present day are still witnessed in the practices and devotions of the people.||

It also appears, that, through the first three centuries and more, no image, whether picture or statue, was placed in the churches, even for ornament, or for historical instruction; and that, when memorials of our Lord and of His departed servants were at length introduced into places of Christian worship, the portraits of living members of the Church were at the same time also admitted; so that the existence of images in the churches, through the next three centuries and more, bears no testimony whatever to any religious veneration offered to them. This point is not more interesting

* Inf., p. 90. † Inf., p. 109. ‡ Inf., p. 63.

§ Inf., p. 81. || Inf., pp. 40 and 265.

and important in itself, than it is evident beyond question. Proofs of the same fact abound everywhere: We need here advert only to one or two:

When Severus, for example, had attached a baptistery to two churches, amongst other ornaments in it, he placed side by side the images of his friend Paulinus and of St. Martin. Paulinus, together with expressions of thankfulness and admiration, protested against this, not because he objected to the introduction of such ornaments, but because he felt himself unworthy of the distinction. He therefore wrote two inscriptions to be set by the images, which might teach men, by the example of St. Martin, to hope and seek for the glory of the saint, and, by the example of Paulinus, to labour for the pardon of the repentant sinner. This Paulinus was the friend and pupil of St. Augustine.*

Another striking instance is recorded by Suidas. Acacius, successor to Gennadius as Patriarch of Constantinople, was a most exemplary chief pastor, and gained the admiration of the clergy, "who set up his image in various houses of prayer." The frequency of these gave birth to a suspicion that he was a man full of ambition and vainglory; a suspicion (says Suidas) much confirmed by the following circumstance: "Though the church near the docks was wholly finished by Gennadius, yet in one of its most conspicuous places was seen a picture in mosaic-work representing our blessed Lord as standing between the two patriarchs, and saying to Gennadius, 'Destroy this temple, and in the time of thy successor I will raise it

* Paulin., epist. xii. ad Sever. (Lyons, A. D. 1677,) p. 191.

up.' These pictures caused Acacius, though a liberal man, and well fitted to govern, yet to be regarded as madly fond of glory."*

Indeed, in those times, so far were pictures in churches from being regarded as objects of religious veneration, that they proved often the cause of jealousy, and were treated as badges of party. A certain Patriarch of Constantinople, we are told, would never commence the service in any church, till he had turned all the images of his predecessor out of it.†

We shall also find that the introduction of pictures and statues into places of worship was constantly resisted by churches and councils, as a dangerous and unholy innovation; and that the religious veneration and worship now paid to them could never be generally established, till, so late as the end of the eighth century, the imperial court of Constantinople (then called New Rome) joined in confederacy for that express purpose with the Bishop of Rome (then called Old Rome); and those authorities, combined, forced the adoption of the decrees of that council upon the countries of Christendom, against the prayers, and protestations, and remonstrances of almost all the European churches, and, among the rest, in a very especial manner, of the prelates and nobles, the clergy and people of England.‡

* Suidas, (Cambridge, 1705,) vol. i. p. 76.

† Theodorus Lector, (Cambridge, A. D. 1720,) p. 587.

‡ Inf., p. 9, &c.

SECTION II.

Besides these facts and conclusions, which belong more immediately to the proper province of this work, another inference, which may probably be regarded in the present day as carrying with it matter of no less interest and importance, has incidentally, but incontrovertibly resulted from our investigation of the Nature and History of Image-worship in the Church of Rome.

Many persons, we are told, have been tempted and persuaded to join the Roman communion by such an argument as this—that among those who are separated from that Church there is no unity, no oneness of faith and doctrine ; that among us there is as great a variety of opinions, as there is of schools, or even of teachers in religion ; so that with us the prayer of our blessed Saviour can never be realised, that His disciples may be one : whereas within the Church of Rome all is unity, one unchanged and unchangeable uniformity in doctrine and practice reigning throughout the world. In that communion, it is asserted, is one faith, one discipline ; and, should ever doubts and disputation arise, they have one infallible ruler and guide in the Bishop of Rome, to whom all must defer, and from whose decision there is no appeal. Many, as credible reports assure us, have been drawn away, by these representations, to seek in that Church a refuge from the perplexities, and din, and disturbances of controversy, in the hope of there, at least, finding rest unto their souls.

Now, manifestly as these representations may be shewn to be fallacious in many departments of faith, and discipline, and practice, in no case more indisputably and beyond gainsaying do they prove themselves to be utterly treacherous and groundless, than in the doctrine and practice of image-worship. It would indeed be difficult to fix upon any points among reformed Churches on which tenets so irreconcileable are maintained, as are the contradictory principles which we find set forth and defended within the Church of Rome by those whom the world must regard as her accredited and authorised teachers. Few persons in England, it is believed, are sufficiently aware of these inconsistencies and contradictions in the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church; on the contrary, we are always told to consider the Roman doctrines, and tenets, and discipline as one.

But, on the subject of image-worship, from the softened, and, as they have been generally regarded, the innocuous doctrines preached by Dr. Milner at the commencement of the present century, and more recently by the Romanist titular Bishops of Siga and Melipotamus, exercising their episcopal functions in England, we pass upwards, through every successive degree and shade of respect, reverence, veneration, worship, and adoration, till we reach that system of divine honour, and supreme spiritual service, and prayers and praises to images, which was taught and maintained by Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura, Lyndwode, Naclantus, and others. Beyond this indeed nothing can further go; but for this we find a di-

rect, full, and perfect exemplar in the Pontifical, the Breviary, and the Missal of Rome itself.

To those who are not practically familiar with the subject, such an assertion as this may appear startling; indeed, it might be fairly laid aside, unless it could be, step by step, substantiated by proof. It will, therefore, be necessary to state the facts of the case here; and we will state them as briefly as we can, consistently with perspicuity and fairness. In this review, we shall not refer to the doctrine of Holy Scripture or of the Primitive Church (that evidence we reserve for the body of this work); our extreme limits will be, on the one hand, the times in which we live, and, on the other, the Council of Eliberis, A. D. 306, which forbade the introduction of any images whatever into the Church, lest the object of Christian worship might be painted on the walls.*

In the year 1836, Dr. Wiseman, the present titular Bishop of Melipotamus, in his thirteenth lecture in Moorfields, with much to the same effect, speaks thus: “Would any one charge me with bad feeling, if, on coming before the representation or image of any one whom I had loved and had lost, I stood before it fixed in veneration and affection, as though the object itself were really before me? Such is precisely all that the Catholic is taught to believe regarding the images and pictures set up in churches.” And again he says, “Whether pictures and images were used in the Church of old, is not a point of much importance; for their use has always been a matter of discipline.

* Inf., p. 151.

The Council of Trent does not decree that we are obliged to use them; it only says, it is wholesome to have them, and that they are to be treated with respect, with a relative respect, that is, SUCH AS IS SHEWN TO THE PORTRAIT OF A FATHER, OR OF ANY ONE WHOM WE ESTEEM OR REVERENCE."

On Dr. Wiseman's strange mistake here, in representing the decree of Trent as not imperative, but merely commendatory, whereas it enacts positively that the sacred images must by all means be retained in churches, we shall observe hereafter.* Here we only desire the reader to remark, that, according to the teaching of this Roman Catholic bishop, Christians are to pay to the images of Christ and His saints such reverence as is shewn to the portrait of a parent, or an esteemed friend.

In 1826, just ten years before the delivery of Bp. Wiseman's lectures, Dr. Baines, the late titular Bishop of Siga, at the consecration of a Roman Catholic chapel in Yorkshire, thus expresses himself: "Really, my Christian brethren, I blush to think it should be necessary to say that Catholics, as well as you [he was then addressing members of the Church of England and Dissenters], know the folly, and detest as much as you the impiety of giving divine honours to a lifeless piece of wood or ivory, however skilfully the sculptors may have fashioned it, or whatever object it may present to the imagination."

Again, he says, "Anathema to the man who worships an image as God, or gives it divine honours, or prays

* Inf., p. 57.

to it;" and, again, "And, my brethren, I will add, without any hesitation or fear, Anathema to myself, if the doctrine I have here explained to you is not the true and universally received doctrine of the Catholic Church."*

In 1825, Henry Howard, Esq., published a pamphlet, entitled "Remarks on the Erroneous Opinions entertained concerning the Catholic Religion." This was reprinted with additions in 1828, and, being now stereotyped for the "Catholic Institute of Great Britain," seems to have received all the sanction which the Roman hierarchy in these islands can impart to any work. Under the head "Images and Relics of Saints," we there read the following statement:—

"The Catholic is accused of worshipping them, but the Church particularly prohibits 'the belief of anything divine, or of any intrinsic efficacy in images or relics, for which they should be revered, or that we should ask anything from them;' and expressly directs, 'that any honour paid to them should be referred to what they represent.' In the common Catechism for Children, to the question 'Do Catholics pray to images?' the answer is, 'No, by no means; we pray *before* them, indeed, to keep us from distractions, but not *to* them, for we know that they can neither see, hear, nor help us.' " "Worship is to God alone," (continues this author;) "and if the sense of that old English word *worship*, which here means to revere, is to be perverted against the Catholics into an act of adoration, a fo-

* Inf., p. 3.

reigner might as well accuse us of adoring the worshipful the Lord Mayor.”* And, again, he says, “The Catholic neither adores nor serves the images, cross, or pictures.”

How irreconcileable the above statements are with the reality, whether in the doctrines of the most celebrated divines of Rome, or in the authoritative teaching and practice of that Church itself, is a point which will presently come before us. Here we would only observe, that we are not disputing about words, nor forcing the word *worship* to mean more than the Church of Rome does *bonâ fide* mean by it. The author last quoted asserts that the members of his Church do not adore the cross, and the catechism to which he appeals declares that they do not pray to images; but on Good Friday every year, as we shall see, the priests and people are, in the Missal, commanded to ADORE the cross, and on the 3rd of May and the 14th of September the Church of Rome does pray to the cross as if it were God our Saviour.

At the commencement of the present century, Dr. Milner asserted that the question of image-worship is a dispute about words, not about things; and assured us, that, if we would make the same allowance to his Church as we claim for ourselves, “this phantom of

* We are charged by our Roman Catholic brethren with disingenuously supporting an accusation against them by using the equivocal English word *worship*. We would do no such thing. It is remarkable that in one single passage Bellarmin employs the words which we usually translate veneration, worship, adoration [*veneratio, cultus, adoratio*] as synonymous and identical in sense. Vol. ii. lib. ii. cap. xxiv.

verbal idolatry would dissolve into air." We cannot acquiesce in this view. The wider our induction, and the closer our examination of the two cases in juxtaposition,—image-worship now, and idol-worship in pagan times,—the less can we discern any real difference between them. The heathen writers, with whom the Fathers of the Primitive Church contended, had just as much right to charge their accusers with entertaining a dispute about words, as our Roman Catholic brethren have now to represent in that light our objection to their worship.*

Many former writers of note (to whom Bellarmin refers†) maintain that no worship is to be paid to the images of saints, or even of our Saviour, and that the faithful are only to worship before the image, directing their worship to God alone. This tenet is refuted by name, and rejected, in the works of Catharinus, Bellarmin himself, and especially by Nac-lantus, and it contradicts in terms the doctrines of Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura, and others of the first authority in the Church of Rome. And we must now, side by side with this tenet, which forbids all religious worship of images, lay the doctrines of those canonised and accredited doctors of the same Church, which maintain that the images of Christ, and the Virgin Mary, and the saints, are to be adored with the self-same worship which is respectively due to the original beings whom those images represent.

Thomas Aquinas, a canonised saint, discusses the matter at length, and rules, that the same worship

* Vide infra, p. 137.

† Tom. ii. lib. ii. cap. xx.

which is of right due to the person represented by the image, must be offered by the faithful to the image itself.*

Bonaventura † unreservedly maintains the selfsame doctrine; and so do many others, renowned teachers of the Church of Rome: and the same we find in modern books of catechetical instruction. We will here quote only the words of one, a most influential member of the Council of Trent, Naclantus. We shall hereafter give a brief analysis of his argument; but the conclusion to which he arrives, and which he unequivocally maintains, he couches in these words:—

“ Wherefore, it must not only be confessed that the faithful in the Church worship before the image, as some perhaps for CAUTION-SAKE speak, but that they do also adore the image without any kind of scruple whatever; nay, moreover, that they venerate it with the same worship with which they venerate its prototype. Consequently, if that [the prototype] has to be adored with *latria*, this also [the image] has to be adored with *latria*; if with *dulia* or *hyperdulia*, this also [the image] is to be in like manner adored with the same kind of worship.”‡

But in good truth such is the doctrine really held and propagated in our own times. In a catechetical work, for example, published at Florence A. D. 1837, called “Christian Doctrine,” in page 35 of the third part, we read the following question and answer:—

“ *Q.* Ought we to pay any adoration at all to the images of Christ, or of the Virgin, or of the saints?

* Inf., pp. 63, 83.

† Inf., p. 64.

‡ Inf., p. 71.

“A. If we consider them only in themselves as a sacred and blessed thing, we shew them that respect only which we feel towards a sacred and blessed thing; but, considered as the representative of a saint, we ought to adore them with the same kind of adoration with which we adore the saint whom they represent.”*

Thomas Aquinas† set the example of confirming these doctrines by an appeal to the actual adoration, the religious worship of the Church of Rome itself, prescribed in her ritual; and, in this, his example has been followed by many. It may perhaps be right to observe here, that the cross is held by all to stand on the same footing with the image of Christ Himself; and while all these doctors maintain that the cross is to be adored with supreme divine worship, honour, and adoration, in this they are most entirely borne out by the authorised and prescribed formularies of the Roman Liturgy. All these points will be more fully established in the body of this work: we must here very briefly cite the facts.

THE BREVIARY OF ROME.—Thomas Aquinas appeals to the adoration of the cross, as we still find it there:—“Hail O Cross, our only hope! To the pious do thou multiply grace; and for the guilty, blot out their sins.”‡

THE MISSAL OF ROME.—The officiating priest is enjoined to ADORE the cross, barefooted and on his knees; and then all the priests are commanded to approach, and adore the cross, two and two; and then the people; the choir chanting meanwhile the prescribed anthems.§

* Inf., p. 268.

† Inf., p. 83.

‡ Inf., p. 84.

§ Inf. p. 85.

THE PONTIFICAL OF ROME.—This book of rites expressly declares what sort of worship and adoration the adoration prescribed by the Missal must be. The Pontifical pronounces that the service of *latrīa*—supreme spiritual worship, the highest worship which can be paid to Almighty God—must be paid to the cross.*

Now, suppose the case of a person impelled by a strong desire of unity, and, assured by the representations of Romanists that their Church alone is possessed of that pearl of great price, in an evil hour leaves the faith of his youth, and surrenders himself to Rome; what is such a convert to Romanism to do in this case of image-worship? He soon discovers as wide a difference, and as irreconcileable an opposition, between members of the communion in which, under the assurance of finding one faith and one discipline, he has taken refuge, as ever he formerly found between the Church which he has forsaken and the Church which he has adopted. Is he to dread the anathemas of the titular Bishop of Siga, and acquiesce in the views of the Bishop of Melipotamus, (supported as they are by many celebrated writers,) and so shrink from joining in the prescribed public worship of his adopted Church, and feel and see that men, canonised saints, to whose works that Church bids “an appeal to be made in all controversies,” declaring them to have been “written as by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,” were themselves subject to the same anathemas? Or is he to brave the imprecations of his modern teachers

* Inf., p. 86.

in England? and reject as fallacious the assurances of the bishops of his own times? and resolve to stand or fall in treading the footsteps of those former saints and doctors? and so, with them and with foreign catechists and doctors of the present day, adore the image of Christ with the selfsame adoration with which he adores the Godhead, and join in the service of his Church, though it compels him to pray to the cross and to adore it?

But other alternatives await him, which, so far from relieving him, will add only to his distress and perplexity. He will find other Roman doctors, whose praises he hears re-echoed in every branch of his adopted Church, discarding at once as false and dangerous both those opposite views, and teaching him that the only sure and safe course is to adopt a middle way, neither on the one hand refusing to worship the images, nor on the other ever assigning to them the selfsame honour which is due to the spiritual being represented by them. And when he proceeds to ascertain for his own practical guidance, where that safe course lies, he will find himself perplexed by subtleties and refinements, which he will have great difficulty to comprehend; and he will have different kinds of worship suggested to him, between which he will have still greater difficulty in making his choice. Whichever of the many doctrines he may adopt, he must be charged with error, either by one party, who believe him to have gone too far, and to have made encroachments on the worship due only to God; or else by another, who consider him to have fallen short of that worship and adoration.

which, over and above respect and reverence, must be paid to the images themselves. And if, to solve his perplexity, he applies to Cardinal Bellarmin, usually represented as the great oracle on such points, he will be still further perplexed; and, without some explanation which we are unable to discover, his confidence in his guide will be seriously shaken.

Cardinal Bellarmin's distinctions involve at least the combination of eight different forms of worship, some of which were maintained as the only right forms by certain sections of his Church, and equally rejected by others. His own views he represents as lying midway between the two extremes; himself at the same time refuting those from whom he differs, and yet making the extraordinary attempt to reconcile the opposite extremes not only with his own doctrine, but with each other; an attempt which has not unfitly been called "child's play."

On the subtleties and refinements by which attempts have been made to reconcile the doctrines and practice of the Church of Rome in its image-worship with the injunctions and prohibitions of Holy Scripture, and with the uniform doctrines and practice of the Primitive Church, we must speak at large in the body of the following work. In this Preface, as the reader will bear in mind, we have brought the several opinions together, for the sole purpose of shewing that the boasted unity of doctrine and discipline in the Church of Rome is only imaginary and delusive, not having its existence in reality and practical truth; that, on the contrary, within the pale

of that communion there have from the first prevailed inconsistent, contradictory, and irreconcileable differences, not only in words, but in matters of fact also. The Church of Rome, in her decrees, pronounces that images must be retained, and must be honoured with due reverence; in her Pontifical, her Breviary, and her Missal she authoritatively enjoins religious worship and adoration to be paid to them. And in defence of her doctrine and discipline, her teachers, bishops, and canonised saints are driven to adopt subtleties the most chimerical, and to rest on assumptions and distinctions as far removed from plain common sense, as they are irreconcileably at variance with the simplicity of primitive Christian worship, and contradictory to the language and spirit of the revealed will of God.

The following Table will exhibit at one view, though not all, yet the chief of those contradictory doctrines which are maintained within the Church of Rome on the subject of image-worship. The references at the foot of each column will enable the reader to verify every statement for himself.

COUNCIL OF ELIBERIS, A.D. 306.

“It is decreed that no images be admitted into churches, lest the object of religious worship come to be painted on the walls.”—See p. 151.

POPE GREGORY THE GREAT, A.D. 598.

“By all means admit images to be placed in the churches for the edification of the unlearned. But shew by proofs of Holy Scripture, that it is unlawful to worship any thing made with hands; for it is written, ‘Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.’ By all means forbid images to be worshipped.”—See p. 232.

SECOND NICENE COUNCIL, A.D. 787.

“Anathema to those who quote against the sacred images the words used in Scripture against idols.

“We venerate, worship, and adore the sacred images.

“Let no one be offended by the idea of worship; for it is said, ‘Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve. The expression ‘ONLY’ is applied solely to the second word, ‘serve,’ not to the word ‘worship.’ We may therefore *worship* the images, provided we do not serve them.

“All persons who profess to honour the sacred images, but refuse to worship them, do dishonour them, and are guilty of hypocrisy.

“But we must not worship the images with *latraria*”—the supreme divine worship due only to God Almighty.—See pp. 13, 15, 20.

THOMAS AQUINAS, A. D.
1260.

BONAVENTURA, A.D. 1270.
LYNDWODE, 1425.

NACLANTUS, A. D. 1567.
DOTTRINA CHRISTIANA,
A. D. 1837, &c.

“To the image the same worship is due, which is due to the person of which it is the image. The cross and the image of Christ must be worshipped with the selfsame supreme worship, *‘latrīa’*, with which Christ Himself is adored.”

“The faithful in the Church do not only worship before the image, (as some, for caution-sake, affirm,) but they do worship the image itself, without any conceivable scruple whatever. Nay, they must worship the image with the worship of right due to the prototype or original being. So that, if the original being is to be worshipped with *‘latrīa’*, (supreme divine worship,) the image must also be adored with the same *‘latrīa.’*”— See pp. 66, 67, 76, 83.

BISHOP BAINES,
A. D. 1827.

DR. WISEMAN,
A. D. 1837.

Bishop Baines, 1827.

“Is it possible that anyone of you should persuade yourselves, that the most ignorant Catholice could be capable of adoring the ivory image which you see upon that altar? Anathema to the man who gives to an image divine honours, or prays to it.”

Dr. Wiseman, 1837.

“If I stood before the image of any one whom I had loved and had lost, fixed in veneration and affection, no one would surely say that I was superstitious or idolatrous in its regard. SUCH is PRECISELY ALL that the Catholice is taught to believe regarding images or pictures set up in churches.” — P. 3. See *Preface*, vii. viii. ix. x. xi.

ROMAN RITUAL OF THE PRE-
SENT DAY, A. D. 1847.

Roman Breviary.

“Hail! O thou Cross! our only hope! To the pious do thou multiply grace; and for the guilty, blot out their sins.

“O thou Cross, do thou save the present congregation assembled for thy praise.

“The King is exalted to the sky, while the noble trophy of the Cross is ADORED by all the worshippers of Christ for ever.”

Roman Pontifical.

“LATRIA” (the supreme divine adoration) “is due to the cross.”

Roman Missal.

“Adoration of the Cross.”

“The priest at the middle of the altar uncovers the cross, and says, ‘Behold the wood of the cross! Come, let us adore!’ The priest then, kneeling, fixes it in front of the altar, and putting off his shoes, approaches to ADORE the cross, kneeling thrice before he kisses it. Then the clergy, and then the laity, two and two, approach, and kneeling thrice, ADORE the Cross.”— See pp. 83, 84, 85.



IMAGE-WORSHIP.*

INTRODUCTION.

IN the following treatise on the Nature and Tendencies of the Romish Doctrine and Practice of Image-Worship, the objects chiefly had in view are three-fold :—

First, Our desire is to confirm and establish the members of our own communion, more and more, in their well-founded, free, loyal, and thankful attachment to the Church of England, as a true branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, purified from the corruptions and deceits which in various essential points

* The reader will bear in mind, that by the words which we translate "image" (in Latin "imago," in Greek *Eikōn*) is meant in the language of ecclesiastical writers, not only a solid figure, (to which the word is now more usually applied,) but also any form, of whatever kind, intended to convey the likeness of any absent being, and to be its representative ; whether the similitude is attempted to be made by colours on canvas, on boards, or on a wall ; or by a molten mass of metal ; or by a block of stone or wood chiselled and carved ; or whether it consist of any other material, as of porcelain ; and whether the figure be called a picture, a statue, an effigy, image, or by any other name.

had for ages excluded the true doctrine of the Gospel, and established themselves in its place :

Secondly, In these times of unscrupulous proselytism, our intention is (not by sounding a general and vague alarm, but by arguments of facts and realities) to warn every one of the awfully hazardous step which those persons take who suffer themselves to be seduced by specious and fascinating representations now artfully interwoven with subtle arguments, to renounce the evangelical and apostolical principles of the Church of England, and to adopt the corruptions and innovations of Romanism in their stead :

And, Thirdly, if it might so be, in these days of universal investigation and inquiry, we would induce such members of the Church of Rome as may be still anxious (and we are told that many such there are) to see an honest and dispassionate examination of the points of difference between their Church and ours, to take the matter up in good earnest ; to weigh the cases uprightly ; and to decide for themselves, as before the God in whom we both believe ; assured that the truth, while it will make them free, will secure to them satisfaction, and comfort and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Desirable as it is that these principles should be kept in view by the reader throughout all our inquiries into the nature and tendencies of Romanism, under no head is the application of them more necessary than it is on the question of image-worship. We have been accustomed to hear from time to time, that the charge brought against the Church of Rome of worshipping and adoring images, is founded in ignorance or wilful misrepresentation ; we have heard her bishops pleading as an apology for answering such charges, “ the otherwise respectable sources whence the

accusations spring,”* and expressing their “fear of insulting the understandings of their audience by supposing any capable of believing them.” We have heard the same authorised teachers ask, with a triumphant assurance intended to silence every doubt, and put an end for ever to further question, “Is it possible, that, in an age and country which claims to be so learned and so enlightened, men should be found capable of believing that the majority of the Christian world,—the great, the good, the learned of almost every civilised nation under heaven,—are so ignorant, so debased, so stupid, so wicked, as to give divine honours to a lifeless and senseless image? Is it possible that any of you should persuade yourselves, that the most ignorant Catholic here present could be capable of adoring, for instance, the ivory image which you see upon that altar?” We have heard, by the same authority, (whose words were most industriously circulated throughout the whole country about twenty years ago,) a most solemn and awful imprecation of divine vengeance pronounced upon others and upon himself in this matter: upon others, who act contrary to what he declares to be the doctrine of his Church; and upon himself, if the declarations he has made do not in very truth contain that doctrine:—

“Anathema to the man that worships an image as God, or gives to IT DIVINE HONOURS, or believes it to possess any portion of divine power or virtue; or places his trust in it; or PRAYS TO IT; or believes it to be anything more than a lifeless, senseless lump of matter.” “And, my brethren, I will add, without

* See “Sermon preached at Bradford, in 1826, by Peter Augustine Baines, D.D., Bishop of Siga,” and republished in the collection made by a society called the Catholic Institute in 1840.

any hesitation or fear, Anathema to myself if the doctrine I have here explained to you is not the true and universally received doctrine of the Catholic Church."*

Now, when, on the one hand, we find such solemn and reiterated protestations as these,—a bishop pledging his hope of eternal salvation as to their truth, and declaring unreservedly, that, not to receive divine honours, but to excite feelings of penitence and devotion towards God, images are placed on high in Roman Catholic churches; and when, on the other, we are ourselves witnesses of the clasped hands held up to the image, the tearful eye fixed on its countenance, the prostrate body, and the loud and bitter cry uttered to the image, calling it by the name of its prototype; when we witness clouds of frankincense rolled up to the image, which for a while apparently concentrates on itself the joint fervent devotions of a whole body of worshippers; we are compelled to ascertain for ourselves what is the reality.

When, moreover, at the same time we read in the approved works of the most celebrated divines and doctors, bishops and cardinals of the Romish Church, that so ought things to be — that images of Christ and his saints ought to be set up for the purpose of being worshipped and adored, that divine honours are of right due to them, and that those are heretics to be abhorred who deny images to be fit objects of religious worship; and, what is yet more, when we find the Roman Pontifical † asserting that the highest supreme divine worship is

* By "Catholics," and "Catholic Church," Dr. Baines throughout this consecration sermon designates the Church of Rome and her members.

† Pontif. Rom. 1595, p. 671. Jussu Clementis, VIII.

due to the material cross, and the Roman Breviary* addressing the material cross with solemn and direct prayer, and the Roman Missal† enjoining the adoration of the material cross: what is our duty, as men accountable to God for our own faith and for the instruction which we may give to our families and fellow-Christians? Can it be any other than patiently and dispassionately to examine the question for ourselves, and to state the results plainly and without reserve to others? And if we find (as we have found) that the doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome is to worship and adore images contrary to God's word and the example of the Primitive Church, (however industriously and skilfully on some occasions the more alarming and revolting features of that worship be kept out of sight,) then surely we are especially bound to apprise our fellow-Christians of what will be required of those who tender their allegiance to Rome; so that they may not, with blinded eyes and implicit reliance on partial representations, surrender themselves to be guided down a gentle and fascinating path, into a gulf from which few human footsteps have ever returned to the light; and where, when inquiry is shut out, and consideration has neither place nor name, the veil will be removed, and the superstitious and deceitful devices of men will be seen in their own natural proportions and deformity.

We purpose, then, in order with more satisfaction to answer the inquiry, What is Romanism with regard to the worship and adoration of images? to ascertain,

1. What were the doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome in this respect before the Reformation, and from which that Reformation rescued us.

* Brev. Rom., Sept. 14th and May 3rd. † Miss. Rom. 1641, p. 201.

2. What were the enactments and binding declarations of the Council of Trent, and the Creed of Pope Pius : What have been the doctrines and explanations of the accredited writers of the Church of Rome : And what has been the visible reality as to the faith and practice countenanced and cherished by the Roman authorities.

And then, 3rdly, How do the results of these inquiries correspond, first, with the plain teaching of Holy Scripture ; and, secondly, with the doctrine and practice of the Primitive Church of Christ through the first five centuries and more.

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PART I.

DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE OF THE CHURCH OF ROME
BEFORE THE REFORMATION.

CHAPTER I.

SECOND COUNCIL OF NICÆA..

IN these days, when not only has the necessity of our Reformation been denied, but its whole nature, and character, and effects have been, with more than usual industry and bitterness, held up to the hatred or contempt and scorn of the world, as unjustifiable, uncharitable, and sinful ; and when attempts are unremittingly made to shake the confidence of our own people in the soundness of our creed, and the Scriptural and primitive purity and excellence of our worship, it seems necessary to review that state of religion in Christendom at the time of the Reformation, for protesting against which, and for purifying our branch of the Church Catholic from which, those men whose names we have been accustomed to hold in reverential and grateful remembrance, have been branded as heretics, and enemies to the Cross of Christ.

On the question of image-worship, (without anticipating what properly belongs to a subsequent branch of our inquiry,) we must here, at the very outset of our investigation, refer to the transactions of the second Council of Nice, at the close of the eighth century,

because it is on the decisions of that assembly that the Romanists chiefly build their present superstructure of image-worship. True it is that they are led to refer to earlier authorities cited in that council, and to rest on the arguments and testimonies then employed by its members (arguments, as we shall hereafter see, not bearing at all on the real point at issue, and testimonies drawn from spurious works attributed to the ancient Fathers); yet to the enactments of this council they recur, as an authority from which there is no appeal. The decrees, indeed, of this assembly are sufficiently comprehensive to admit of the most unqualified worship and adoration of images; and yet we find that the restrictions and modifications expressed individually by its members were too full of caution to satisfy subsequent maintainers of image-worship in the Church of Rome; these appear to have passed all former bounds, and to have boldly propagated doctrines on the worship and adoration of images, for which the most zealous advocates and champions of that worship, even at the close of the eighth century, were not yet fully prepared.

After the Christian world had been convulsed through the eighth century by the furious struggles of those who maintained the lawfulness and duty of worshipping and adoring images on the one hand, and those on the other who resisted the introduction of this novel worship as unscriptural, and unapostolical, and heathenish, (struggles not of the pen and tongue only, but of actual seditions and civil wars, and massacres, and murders)—at the close of the century, A. D. 787, a council, called the “Second Nicene Coun-

cil," was held at Nicæa or Nice, in Bithynia, for the express purpose of establishing through Christendom the worship and adoration of images in the Church of Christ. What preceded and what followed this council, as far as concerns our present inquiry, will more properly be reserved for a subsequent branch of our investigation. For our immediate purpose in this section we need not dwell on those points, because (as Cardinal Bellarmin reminds us) the decrees of that council, however directly opposed to the previous Council of Constantinople, and however resisted afterwards by Charlemagne, and the Councils of Frankfort and Paris, and by the clergy and nobles of England, yet ultimately prevailed, and formed the rule of the Roman Church.

Leo, the fourth emperor of that name, (whom historians report to have been carried off by poison at the impious counsel of his wife Irene,) died A. D. 780. Irene held the reins of government for her son Constantine, then a minor; and, under her auspices, the second Council of Nice was convened. It was attended as well by bishops who had before opposed the worship of images, and who now came forward to avow their errors, and to tender their adhesion to the cause which they had before anathematised, as by those who had been before most zealous and uncompromising supporters of the worship of images; Adrian, Archbishop of "Old Rome," the Apostolic See, being represented by two of his own clergy; and Tarasius, Patriarch of Constantinople, or "New Rome," being present in person; the bishops of the "Eastern Diocese," or "Apostolical Sees," as they are equally called, being represented by two of their clergy.

Here it may be well to observe in passing, that on

one individual ecclesiastic seems to have been present at this council who held the sentiments to condemn which it was purposely convened. Cardinal Bellarmin, indeed,* says that the subject was fully and thoroughly discussed, the disputation being carried on sharply, and the evidence of Scripture, councils, and Fathers being brought forward. But this is very far from being the case : there was no discussion ; no opinion of living divines or of departed Fathers was admitted which at all ran counter to the decrees already resolved upon. Even the testimony of Eusebius against images was not allowed to be read, but was only alluded to, and condemned by an anathema involving his works and all who received them. Everything was brought to the council ready prepared, just as now the report of a committee presented to an unanimous meeting is read and adopted ; everything proceeded without interruption as a matter of course, except when the president or some member of the council expressed his approbation, or confirmed some statement by his own testimony. From first to last we find no counter-statement or dispute of any kind.

* Vol. II. book II. chap. xii.



CHAPTER II.

SECOND COUNCIL OF NICEA—*continued.*

THE first Act or Session of the council begins with a motion made by the Bishops of Sicily, That it is right and becoming for him who presides, the most holy Archbishop and Chief Ruler of royal Constantinople, New Rome, to open the council by delivering his sentiments. This being carried, Tarasius addressed the assembly; and at the close of his speech Constantine, Bishop of Constantia, in Cyprus, moved that the bishops who lay under a charge of heresy, and were present desiring forgiveness and reconciliation, be called in. This was agreed to; and after some inquiry as to the canonical reconciliation of those who had been in error and had returned to the true faith, these bishops were permitted to declare their errors, and read the confession of their present creed. Our subject requires that specimens of these retractions and professions should be laid before the reader.

Immediately on the motion of Constantine being carried, Basil Bishop of Ancyra, Theodorus Bishop of Myra, and Theodosius Bishop of Ammorium were called in. Basil first read his own recantation at great length; and Theodorus read as his own a copy of the same paper, on hearing which some of the council thanked God; and then Theodosius was brought forward, and spake thus:—

My all-holy masters, honoured of God, and all this holy assembly! I, too, a miserable and deceived sinner, who have spoken many evil words against the sacred images, now comprehending the truth, have changed my views and condemned myself, and have plainly cursed and do curse what I have evilly said and taught in this world; and I pray and beseech your holy assembly, that, with all Christians, you will receive me, your unworthy servant."

"Tarasius, the most holy Patriarch, said, 'The most reverend Theodosius has shewn great contrition of heart, and is worthy to be received.'"

After this, Theodosius read his own statement, as follows:—

"To the holy and oecumenical council, Theodosius, the least of Christians.—I confess and agree, and receive and salute and *worship*,* first of all, the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, our true God, and the holy image of her who bare Him, the holy theotocos; and her help and protection, and her mediation, every day and night, I, as a sinner, invoke for my help, she having freedom of speech with Him who was born of her, Christ our God: and also the images of the holy and celebrated apostles, prophets, martyrs, fathers, and ascetics of the desert, I receive and worship—not as Gods (may that not be!); but even now, shewing the temper and desire of my soul which I originally entertained towards them, I call upon them all, with my whole soul, to mediate for me with God, that He would grant me, through their mediations, to find mercy with Him at the day of judgment. Like-

* It may be well to observe, that throughout the records of this council the word we translate *worship* (*προσκυνεῖν*) is translated in the Latin by "adorare."

wise, also, I worship, honour, and salute the relics of the saints, as those who have struggled for Christ, and received grace from Him to effect cures and heal diseases, and cast out devils, as the Church of the Christians has received from the holy Apostles and fathers to our own times. And I am well pleased that in the churches also of the saints there should be exhibited chiefly the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the holy one who bare God, formed of all kinds of materials, gold and silver, and colours of every kind, that the dispensation of his incarnation might be known to all men; and likewise, that there be exhibited the manner of life of the holy and celebrated Apostles, prophets, and martyrs, that their struggles and contests may be made known for a brief description, and for stirring up and teaching the people, especially the simple sort."

Then, having piteously implored the council to receive him back, he thus ends his address:—

“On those who do not worship the holy and sacred images, anathema! On those who blaspheme the holy and sacred images, anathema! On those who dare to utter blasphemy and accusation against the sacred images, or to call them idols, anathema! On the accusers of Christians, I mean the Iconoclasts, anathema! On those who do not carefully teach all the people who love Christ to worship and salute the sacred, holy, and honourable images of all the saints who have pleased God from the beginning of the world, anathema! On those who have a doubtful mind, and do not from their soul confess that they worship the sacred images, anathema!”

After these full confessions of their own conversion, and these bitter maledictions on all who even entertained in their minds doubts on the subject, had greatly

affected the audience, Tarasius, who acted throughout as president of the council,* put the question as to the reconciliation of these offending bishops thus:—“Is it your pleasure that they take their seats?” To this the monks (representatives of the Eastern Apostolical Sees) expressed their assent; and the three bishops “were ordered to sit, each on his proper bench and seat.”

In the second Session, the letter of Pope Adrian to Tarasius was read, urging him to persevere in his resolution to receive, uphold, and worship the sacred images, and to be united with filial affection to the Apostolic See of old Rome, which he was very careful to declare to be the head of all the churches.

In the third Session, to a letter addressed to Tarasius, “Archbishop of Constantinople, and Patriarch of the whole world” [*oecumenical*], the Eastern bishops append a confession of Theodorus, sometime Patriarch of Jerusalem, which contains much matter worthy of notice, and which, while it lays open and bare before us the futile and ungrounded arguments from Scripture and the Fathers by which image-worship was then, as it is now, defended, shews (the defenders of image worship themselves being our witnesses) that, whenever attempts were made from the first to introduce images as objects of religious worship in the Church, there were always men, imbued with the principles of primitive times, ready to oppose and denounce them.

Having said, “the holy images we worshipping embrace,” and having specified first of all the picture and figure of our blessed Lord, Theodorus proceeds:—

* When the members sign their consent, the locum-tenens of Adrian, “Pope of the older Rome,” signs first.

“ We, moreover, honour and adore the image of his unpolluted mother, the holy theotocos, our immaculate Lady. We must also honour the images of the Apostles, prophets, and gloriously victorious martyrs, holy and just, as friends of God ; not presenting our reverence to the matter and colour, but led through these by the eyes of our mind to the original, referring the honour to him ; knowing, according to the great St. Basil, that the honour of the image passes through to the original. But to those who contentiously argue and say that we ought not to worship the images of the saints, being made with hands, foolishly, or rather impiously, calling them idols, we say, ‘ Let such know that the cherubim and the mercy-seat, and the ark and table, which the divine Moses prepared at the command of God, were made with hands and were worshipped.’ ”

On the misinterpretation of Scripture, and the reference here made to St. Basil, which, however, has not the most remote bearing on image-worship, we must speak under another head of our inquiry ; at present we need only observe, that, while the bishops then assembled, in number three hundred and eighteen, impose “ terrible cursings on all those who do not agree with them in honouring, reverencing, and worshipping images,” and especially condemn “ the assembly unlawfully called the Seventh Council,” (the Council of Constantinople above referred to, which denounced the worship of images, and forbade their admission into the churches,) Constantius, the reconciled Bishop of Constantia, expressly reserves the worship of Latria to the Holy Trinity, a reservation which we shall find rejected both before and after the Council of Trent.

In the fourth Session of this assembly, we are pained by lamentable examples of that eagerness to uphold a theory, that can wrest passages of Holy Scripture to prove a doctrine on which they have no bearing; and cite as the testimony of ancient Fathers what they never wrote; and quote their real sentiments on one subject, to establish another utterly at variance with them.

For example :—

Moses made the ark, the mercy-seat, and the cherubim, for the people to worship; therefore Christians ought to have the images of Christ, and his saints, and the Virgin to worship.*

Again, St. Chrysostom, in his encomium on a holy man named Meletius, addressing his audience as persons acquainted with the merits of his subject, says, that so entirely had Meletius won the affections of the people, and so deeply had he impressed them with the sacredness of his character, “that the very remembrance of his name was sufficient to dispel from their minds every inordinate feeling and desire.” “And not only was his name heard in all their paths, their fields, their market-places, but many had his likeness engraven on the medallions of their rings, their cups, and goblets, and on the walls of their chambers; so that not only did they hear his holy name, but saw the form of his person everywhere, and thus derived a twofold consolation for his departure.” And this is cited as a proof that John Chrysostom approved of images, and set the example of receiving them as “reverend, sacred, and holy!” “If John of the golden mouth spake thus of images, who will any longer dare to speak a word

* Under a subsequent head we shall examine the passages alleged from Holy Scripture as countenancing the religious worship of images.

against them?" The question at issue was, not whether Christians might have the portraits of their friends and of holy men hanging on their walls or engraved on their seals, but whether images should be set up in churches, and be worshipped.

The rest of this fourth Act is chiefly taken up by legends of miracles wrought by images. It is a melancholy page of Christian history, and informs us only too plainly how firm a grasp superstition had then taken of the minds of those who should have been the lights of the world. To such instances as are alleged on the authority of any Father of the first five centuries we shall advert hereafter; at present we must leave this Act of the council, with only one or two remarks.

After a very long account (quoted as from the great St. Athanasius, but beyond question not his) of an image of our Saviour working miracles, the Patriarch of Constantinople, anticipating the doubt which might offer itself to some present on hearing the account of so many miracles wrought by images in former times, conscious that no such miracles were wrought by the images in their possession then, interposes thus:— "But lest any should say, 'What is the cause why the images with us now do not work miracles?' we answer him, 'Because, as the Apostle says, signs are for those who believe not, and not for those who believe;' and those who used to approach the image were unbelievers. So God wrought the miracles through the image to draw them to the faith of us Christians."

Here we have a clear acknowledgment, as far as the President's testimony goes, that miracles by images had then ceased to be wrought; and the principle recognised, that, when they were wrought, it was for

the conversion of unbelievers: and yet in the self-same session, one named Manzon, himself a member of the council and a bishop, gets up and declares, that the year before, on his returning home from Constantinople, he fell so grievously ill, that he called his friends together to make his will. "Meanwhile the disorder continuing, I took the image of Jesus Christ, and said, 'Lord, who givest grace to Thy saints, look upon me!' and on my putting the same revered image upon the limb affected, immediately the disease was driven away, and I was made well." Upon which, Theodorus, Bishop of Seleucia, rose and said: "This was known to us also, for it is in our neighbourhood."

At every stage of our inquiry into the origin, progress, and present state of image-worship, we are struck with the palpable contradictions and inconsistencies into which its supporters are constantly falling. Here we have one bishop making to his fellow-councillors an apology for the non-appearance of miracles wrought by images in their times; and another declaring that a few months only before the council a miracle was wrought on himself by an image, to which another bishop adds his hearsay confirmation. But another contradiction is forced upon us here between Tarasius, president of this council, on one side, and that other bishop and Cardinal Bellarmin, on the other. The Patriarch of Constantinople, at the end of the eighth century, says distinctly that the miracles which were wont to be wrought by images were wrought on unbelievers for their conversion: that other bishop declares the miracle was wrought on himself, already a believer and a minister even of the Church; and Cardinal Bellarmin maintains that miracles were wrought by images on purpose to

establish their right to veneration and worship; and that the benefits resulting therefrom were conferred* solely and exclusively on those who honoured images and believed that the worship of them pleases God; consequently he concludes, that, if image-worship is idolatry, God proves Himself to be the chief promoter of idolatry.

It is also remarkable that a similar apology which Tarasius here makes for the cessation of miracles by images in his time, his predecessor Germanus, who was Patriarch of Constantinople when Gregory was Bishop of Rôme, nearly two hundred years before, makes for the same thing. The instance he specifies, and which he says was beyond gainsaying and doubt, and of all the most evident, was the miracle wrought by the image of the Virgin Mary (a picture in Sozopolis of Pisidia), which sent forth from its painted hand a springing stream of ointment, of which there were many witnesses. "But if," he adds, "such a miraculous act is not seen now, not on that account should former acts be disbelieved, lest also what is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles should be judged incredible." This is contained in a treatise purporting to be an epistle from Germanus to Thomas Bishop of Claudiopolis, and cited in the fourth Act of this council. And, unhappily, this is the view urged upon Christians now,—Either Rome or infidelity,—either believe what Rome now holds, or be at once open and professed infidels: an inference from which those who are from their hearts and inmost consciences Christians, but who cannot subscribe to the doctrines of Rome, shrink with mingled feelings of indignation and horror.

* Lib. ii. cap. xii.

Another remark of no small importance here suggests itself, arising from the comment of Anastasius on the words, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve,” and also the observations of the council and its president on that comment.

“And let no one,” he says, “stumble at the intimation of worship. For we worship holy men and angels; but we do not *serve* them. For, says Moses, ‘Thou shalt *worship* the Lord thy God, and Him ONLY shalt thou SERVE.’ Observe how to the words ‘thou shalt serve’ is added ‘only;’ not so to ‘thou shalt worship.’ So that we may lawfully worship; for worship is a sign of honour; but by no means may we serve: consequently, neither must we pray to them.”

The council having on this observed, that what they called* the false council had impiously quoted this passage in their defence, the President Tarasius said, “See how the most learned father interprets it. What he has brought forward induces all of us to receive and to worship images; for worship is a sign of honour. All persons, then, WHO PROFESS TO HONOUR THE SACRED IMAGES, BUT REFUSE THEIR WORSHIP, will be convicted by the holy father as speaking with hypocrisy; for, in reality, those who do not receive their worship, which is the sign of honour, shew that they are working the contrary, their dishonour.”

Here is a most clear and explicit declaration, that, according to this council, to honour the images is not enough; on the contrary, it is pronounced to be mere hypocrisy, unless that honour be the honour of worship; and although Anastasius makes an exception of

* The council at Constantinople, which had condemned image-worship about thirty-two years before.

prayer, yet no worship is alluded to in the passage of Scripture, except that same worship, whatever it be, with which the Almighty commands Himself to be honoured, when He says, “Thou shalt WORSHIP the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.” In conformity with this decision, the council declare, that they honour and salute, and with honour worship the sacred images; and having pronounced curses on all who hold any opposite doctrine, especially those who call the images idols, or “apply to the sacred images the words uttered in Scripture against idols,” close the fourth Act by subscribing their names to it.

It is worthy of remark, that the very passage of Holy Scripture which, in this council, is cited to prove that images may be worshipped with the same worship which the Almighty commands His people to pay to Himself, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God,” though they are not to be SERVED, had been appealed to by Gregory the Great, to shew that images are not to be worshipped:—“ You must shew by proof of Holy Scripture, that it is not lawful to WORSHIP anything made with hands, since it is written, ‘Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.’ ”*

The fifth Act abounds with numerous legends cited to prove that God wrought miracles by the images, and, therefore, that the images were to be honoured and worshipped. The two last of these testimonies (by no means the worst) are thus cited word for word:—

“A certain woman in the region of Apamiae dug a well; and after she had been to much expense, and gone to a great depth, she found no water, and was

* Epist. lib. xi., Epist. xiii. vol. i. p. 1100.

sadly dejected, both on account of the labour and of the cost. On one occasion, in her sleep, she saw a person, who said to her, 'Send and bring the image of the Abbot Theodosius, and God gives thee water through him.' The woman sent two of her men, and received the image of the saint, and it being let down into the well, forthwith and immediately the water came out, so as to fill half the well. They then brought to us of the same water, and we drank and glorified God."

"Dionysius, the elder of the Church of Ascalon, gave us this account of the Abbot John, the anchorite:—'This man was great in this generation, and this wonder is a confirmation of his acceptance with God. The old man lay in a cave in the parts about Socchus, somewhat less than twenty miles from Jerusalem. Now, he had in the cave an image of our holy unpolluted Lady Mary, theotocos, and ever Virgin, holding Christ, our God, in her arms. Whenever, then, he wished to go into distant deserts, or to Jerusalem to worship the holy cross or the holy places, or to Mount Sion to pray, or to the martyrs who were far distant from Jerusalem, (for he was particularly fond of the martyrs; and at one time he would go to the holy John at Ephesus, at another to the holy Theodorus of Euchais, or the holy Thecla of Seleucia, or the holy Sergius at Arapha,) he prepared his candle, and lighted it, as was his custom, and standing and praying that his journey might be directed aright, he said to the Lady, looking at her image, 'Holy Lady, theotocos, since I have a long way to go, having before me the journey of many days, take care of your own candle, and keep it from going out, according to my purpose, for I make my journey, having your help for my companion.' Having said

this to the image, he went his way, and having completed his intended journey, he returned, sometimes after a month, now and then after two or three, and sometimes after five or six, and so he found his candle prepared and lighted, as he had left it when he went on his journey; and he never saw it extinguished of itself, neither when he rose up from sleep, nor when he returned from the desert to his cave."

On this Tarasius exclaimed, "We are now satiated with testimonies from the Fathers; and we know that the setting up of the sacred images is an ancient tradition. We therefore are followers of the holy Fathers." On this Stephen the Monk observes, "We have other volumes in the cause of the holy images, to the number of fifteen. But as you order." "We are full," rejoins the Patriarch, "and are satisfied."

It is painful to find an Assembly, consisting of nearly four hundred Christian bishops and doctors, listening to such trifling fables with eagerness and satisfaction, and grounding on them the truth of the dogmas which they enact, and which they impose on all their fellow-Christians, on pain of incurring "frightful anathemas." Yet on such a foundation rests the doctrine of the worship and adoration of images in the Roman Catholic Church at the present day.

However great our sorrow to find that decrees, intended to rule the faith and practical religion of Christendom, should be built on such a foundation as that on which the second Nicene Council raised its superstructure of image-worship, our surprise cannot be less, when we witness the reckless and contemptuous manner in which the same assembly

threw overboard, without examination of its merits and weight, any testimony from whatever quarter, which was alleged as militating against the conclusion to which they had already come before they entered the council-chamber, and which they were resolved to uphold and maintain. If there were any of the Fathers of the Primitive Church, whose evidence on subjects involving the early practice of Christians we should have beforehand expected a council, at the close of the eighth century, to have weighed with patience, and candour, and reverence, Eusebius would certainly be among that number. Instead of this, we find the evidence of that celebrated Father of the Antenicene Church summarily, and scornfully, and despitefully cast aside, as not only unworthy of consideration, but as unfit to be read, and deserving only the hatred and cursings of the council.*

Having speedily despatched some books which pretended to have the superscriptions of the Apostles, the president Tarasius said, "Those who have babbled against the sacred images have brought forward Eusebius for a testimony, in his letter written to Constantia, the wife of Licinius; and let us see of what opinion Eusebius is." Immediately a monk read an extract, all prepared and ready, from a work "of Eusebius to Euphratian," (the Latin translation calls it the eighth book,) in which the words, as they are quoted, deny the co-existence of the Father and

* Undoubtedly many later writers have, without scruple, charged Eusebius with either direct heresy, or else vacillation and dishonesty as to his views of our Lord's perfect divinity,—charges from which others of unquestionable piety and orthodoxy have been strenuous in rescuing his memory.

the Son. On this, Tarasius asks, "Do we admit this man?"—"God forbid, my lord!" replied the council; "let this man be held in greater hatred than the others." The two representatives of the Roman Pontiff Adrian then observed, "This passage shews that he held an Arian view." The narrative adds, "The book of Eusebius thus brought forward contained other blasphemies, which the council would not endure to hear." Tarasius said, "We cast away his writings;" the Council responding, "We both reject them and curse them." The Monk Stephen then read a passage from Antipater, Bishop of Bostra, allowing that Eusebius was a most learned man, and had left many writings behind him, some of which were worthy of all acceptance; but charging both him, as the supporter of Origen, and Origen also—the defender and the defended—with heresy, and ending by addressing him as if he were present: "O thou clever advocate of the absurdities of Origen!" On this, Tarasius exclaimed, "The works of Eusebius are proved, even by the voice of a Father, to be foreign from the Catholic Church." Not another word was said, and the council went on to the next business.

We may, however, observe, that the cause of Christian truth gained this great advantage from the unjustifiable suppression of the testimony of Eusebius. That Father is here recorded, beyond all gainsaying, to have borne his testimony, clear and irrefutable, against the worship of images in the Church. The council could not venture to entertain or suggest a suspicion that the testimony was not genuine; and, so conclusive was it against them, that they preferred to brand with infamy and to curse as a heretic one of the renowned Fathers of the Christian Church,

rather than admit his evidence against their cause, or even suffer it to be read.

For a knowledge, moreover, of this testimony of Eusebius against image-worship, we are indebted to this very council. In its sixth act, a book is read, containing the statements, and arguments, and doctrines of the previous Council of Constantinople, together with a running comment on the part of this second Nicene Council by way of refutation; and, among the testimonies cited at Constantinople and rejected here, is this passage of Eusebius. We shall therefore quote it when we examine that Father's evidence.

To the subsequent Acts of the council, which record the decrees and proceedings of that previous Council of Constantinople, we must refer hereafter.

That this Nicene council was convened chiefly by the management of the court of Rome, and that all its proceedings were conducted with the view of meeting the wishes of that See, is evident by what we know from its history, and is proved by internal testimony through all its stages; and at the last, as the practical issue, and as if to set a final seal to the whole affair, one of the Pope's representatives proposed to the council, that "on the morrow a venerable image should be set up, for all the council to salute it," which was decreed.

CHAPTER III.

SECOND COUNCIL OF NICÆA—ITS' DECREES RESISTED.

FROM this council must be dated the successful triumph of image-worship over the simple, and pure, and spiritual service of primitive Christianity. Armed with the authority and anathemas of this council and with their own, the Bishops of Rome, who had long fostered and headed the party in favour of image-worship against their antagonists, found nothing which could effectually resist the spread of this novelty over Christendom. True it is, that letters ascribed to Charlemagne* (denied indeed by some to have been his, yet certainly published in his days) advocated the old religion; but these were thought worthy of being answered by the Pope himself, and were overborne. True it is, that councils and assemblies (whether they be called provincial or national, and whatever uncertainty may hang over them) were assembled at Paris,† Frankfort, Mayence, and elsewhere, for the purpose of

* To these letters we must again refer more than once.

† Cardinal Bellarmin (Appendix De Cult. Imag. vol. ii. p. 522) denies to the assembly at Paris, held under Louis the Pious, son of Charlemagne, the name of a council; and attacks the proceedings of the Gallican divines at that time, chiefly on account of their audacity in examining and judging the acts of him who was the judge of themselves and of *the whole world!* (that is, Pope Adrian;) and concludes a long argument against it by asserting, that, whether the book containing the records of this assembly be true or false, or partly true and partly false, it is not worth the time spent in reading it; and that, had the editor looked more to the public good than his own profit, it would not have been published!'

opposing the prevalence of the new decrees. But, in opposition to the phalanx arrayed against them, marshalled as it was and swollen by all the strength of the Roman hierarchy, and, wherever image-worship had already gained a footing, supported by those establishments to which the miracles said to be wrought by their images brought yearly increasing revenues, the scattered and unorganised maintainers of primitive worship could not long make head, and image-worship became dominant, with few exceptions, throughout all Christendom.

This innovation having thus struck its roots into almost every portion of the Lord's vineyard, its fruits were soon abundant everywhere. Our fallen and frail nature, ever inclined to lean and rest on the accommodating but treacherous helps of superstition, rather than, under God's grace, to brace up its nerves, and exert its best endeavours to secure the blessed promises of the "everlasting Gospel," not only received this will-worship of images with acquiescence, but hailed it as a boon. And thus the authority of the Pope, and of the subordinate rulers of the Church, the secular interests of religious bodies and of different Churches, and the ever-recurring inclinations of the unenlightened and unconverted human mind, formed a triple cord too strong for anything, but the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, to sever. In our branch of the Catholic Church, it pleased the great Bishop of souls, in his own good time, to effect that blessed work by our great Reformation, and we are thankful. But our thankfulness must shew itself in unremitting vigilance and honest exertions to prevent any return of the superstitions from which we have been rescued; and a recollection

of the state of worship, and of the practices among us during the uncurbed prevalence of Romanism, would seem well fitted to keep awake that vigilance, and stimulate us to those exertions.

Here, however, it will not perhaps be thought out of place, if we first refer somewhat more at large to the resistance made in our own country to the introduction of image-worship consequent upon the propagation of the decrees of the second Nicene Council. Over various points in the history of those days of gloom and falling-back from the pure light of the Gospel towards the practices of paganism, much of doubt and obscurity hangs. The original records, whatever they were, appear to have been purposely destroyed ; and it is much more easy for persons of opposite sentiments on the subject before us to make contradictory statements, than to establish their own views by evidence. Still, with regard to the sorrow, and alarm, and dismay which the doctrine of image-worship, to be insisted upon as an article of faith and discipline, excited in England, the testimony yet preserved leaves no place for reasonable doubt.

Through the first ages of Christianity in these islands, as in the Churches throughout all Christendom, there is no trace to be found of images set up in the churches or elsewhere for adoration. And when, in after days, Augustine the Monk was sent hither from Rome, though he and his companions carried for their banner a silver cross and a picture of Christ, yet there is no mention of any image or picture to be worshipped.

No trace of such worship at that time is found in the books of Bede, though he dwells much on the miraculous workings of the cross. His words are :

“ But they [Augustine and his companions], endued not with demoniacal but with divine virtue, came bearing a silver cross for their standard, and the image of our Saviour painted on a board ; and, singing Litanies, prayed to the Lord for the salvation of themselves and of those on whose account they came.”* And the same author, when arguing in behalf of the admission of images and pictures, expressly applies their use to the instruction of the more unlearned in those doctrines which others might derive from books.

The reasoning of Spelman† seems unanswerable :— “ Most sure it is, that, if those first propagators of religion among the Anglo-Saxons had adored the cross and images, and had taught that they were to be worshipped, some mention of it would be found in some contemporary author. But not even Bede himself, among so many miracles of the cross of which he tells, and diversified and fervent devotions of the pious, as far as I know, mentions any one individual who either adored the cross, or an image, or put forth either the one or the other to be worshipped.”

Roger Hoveden’s words are very clear, and are found, with some unimportant variations, in Matthew of Westminster, and others :—

“ A. D. 792. Charles, King of the Franks, sent into Britain a synodal book directed to him from Constantinople ; in which book (alas, to our grief !) many things were found unbecoming and contrary to the true faith ; chiefly that it had been established by the unanimous consent of almost all the Eastern doctors, not less than three hundred bishops, or even more, that images ought to be adored ; a thing on which the Church of God looks utterly with execration. Against

* See Lib. de temp. Salam. c. xix.

† Concil. Brit. A.D. 792.

which Albinus [Alcuin] wrote a letter, wonderfully confirmed by the authority of the Holy Scriptures, and carried it, together with the same book, in the name of our bishops and chief men, to the King of the Franks.”*

Although there is considerable difficulty in reconciling the dates assigned to the events of this period by different authors, the following seems to be the order least liable to objections, and most consistent with the insulated statements which have been delivered down to us as to the proceedings in England, with regard to images, at the close of the eighth century.

Charlemagne, at that time King of France,† had formed a friendship and alliance with Offa, the English King of Mercia; and, on receiving from the East a copy of the decrees of the Second Nicene Council, which he seems at first to have regarded with favour, forwarded them, as a most acceptable present to Offa, for the instruction and guidance of himself and his bishops and people. But the royal present met with a very different reception here from what Charlemagne had anticipated. The nobles and bishops expressed their utter abhorrence of image-worship—this outlandish innovation, as it was called—as a thing to be detested by the Church of God. And the greatest scholar of the age, and most learned in the Scriptures, being no other than Charlemagne’s own tutor and preceptor, the renowned Alcuin, wrote a letter himself to his royal master, condemning the decrees of that council, and grounding his condemnation of it on most sure warrant of Holy Scripture; and this letter he presented to Charlemagne in the name of the bishops

* Ed. 1696, p. 233. † See Conc. Mag. Brit. London, 1737, p. 158.

and nobles of England. Charlemagne, it is said, was so moved by the reasons thus laid before him, that he called the Council of Frankfort, to deliberate on the question; and that assembly, consisting of more than three hundred bishops, condemned the decision of the second Council of Nice, and rejected the worship of images as an unchristian and heathenish innovation. Whatever be the real state of the case as to the councils of Frankfort, Mayence, and Paris, (said to have condemned image-worship when first pressed on the Western Churches,) it seems quite clear that the tidings of the new decrees filled the nobles and clergy of England with dismay, and met with that resistance which we have above mentioned. But the united and unwearied efforts of the Court of Rome, backed by the temporal accession of wealth which the new doctrine brought to the religious orders, and by the superstitious tendency of unenlightened human nature, prevailed, and bore down all opposition. No arguments from Scripture, or from primitive antiquity could make head against it; and not long after, in our own land, no less than through the East, images were erected as objects of veneration and worship, not in the churches only and monasteries, but on every high hill, and under every green tree, among the smooth stones of the brook, and on the barren heath, in the solitude and by the way-side, and in the market, and every place of concourse. Of the consequences of this foreign innovation, we have, as it has been before intimated, too plain and multiplied proofs in contemporary records.

We have seen that even in the second Council of Nice, A. D. 787, the admission and the worship of images was sought to be maintained by establishing a

belief in the miraculous powers with which the images had been endowed; and this assurance was everywhere interwoven with the propagation of the doctrine of image-worship, not only by the preaching of monks and the circulation of legends, but by the direct teaching of the Church itself in its authorised services and ordinances.

Instead, then, of images being at that time represented as merely mementos of our Saviour's mercy and our own consequent duty, the very terms employed in consecrating them encouraged and implied the belief that they were thereafter to be endued with power miraculously imparted to them, to ward off or mitigate temporal evils, and to procure or augment temporal good things; to drive away the spiritual enemy of mankind, and promote the salvation of those who were possessed of them. Storm and tempest, floods and scarcity, civil discord and foreign invasion, domestic calamities and personal distress,—in a word, every evil which can befall us in this vale of misery, or as pilgrims in our way to God, were to be either escaped altogether, or at least diminished or more speedily remedied by the intervention of the image, to those who possessed and worshipped it. Of this the records of our own country supply abundant evidence from every quarter. It may be well in this place to bring before our minds a few instances, by way of example.

In the Pontifical Book* of Exeter Cathedral, lately published, among many other ordinances of the Church, we find various prescribed forms of consecration. The following passages are extracted from the rites to be

* "Liber Pontificalis" of Edmund Lacy, Bishop of Exeter, a manuscript of the fourteenth century. Edited by Ralph Barnes, Esq. Exeter, 1847. Pp. 224, &c.

observed in dedicating a new cross and a new image of the Virgin Mary:—

“Let the Bishop bless the water, and with it sprinkle the cross.” Then follow these prayers:—“We beseech Thee, O Lord, Holy Father Almighty, everlasting God, that Thou wouldest vouchsafe to bless this wood of Thy cross, that it may be a saving remedy to mankind, the confirmation of the faith, the perfecting of good works, and the redemption of souls; a comfort and safeguard and defence against the cruel darts of our foes. Let this royal cross be the confirming of faith, the promotion of hope, our defence in adversity, victory against the enemy, concord in the state, our defence in the field, our stay in the house. By the virtue of this cross preserve thy flock safe, O Lord!” Then the cross is anointed with chrism, and afterwards fumed with incense; after which the bishop says, “We humbly beseech Thee, O Lord, that this sign of Thy holy cross may in the Church be a saving remedy, to be continually ADORED by all the faithful. Shew Thy marvellous loving-kindness by virtue of the holy cross, and grant that, in the places and houses of the faithful where this cross shall be, devils and unclean spirits may be put to flight, and pestilent diseases banished, and all adverse powers and plots of the enemy be repelled by the presence of this cross,” &c. “Afterwards let the cross be honourably placed, and let it be ADORED BY ALL, and first by the bishop; and, whilst IT IS BEING ADORED, let this anthem be sung by the choir:—“O cross! more brilliant than all stars! famous in the world! very lovely to men! more holy than all! who alone wast worthy to bear the weight of the world! sweet wood! bearing the sweet

nails and sweet burdens, save thou the present congregation assembled to-day for thy praises." Then, among other prayers towards the close of the ordinance, is this blessing:—"The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, come down and remain upon this cross, that it may be for ever a saving cure to all who ADORE IT."

We cannot refrain from putting these prayers and adorations of a cross side by side with the indignant remonstrance of Dr. Baines, in 1826, to which we have before adverted:—"Is it possible," he says, "that any of you" (the mixed congregation in the Roman Catholic chapel at Bradford) "could persuade yourselves that the most ignorant Catholic here present could be capable of ADORING the ivory image which you see on that altar?"

The Roman Pontifical, in the order for blessing the cross, (published by command of Clement VIII., 1595, and again so lately as 1818,) may be left to answer this question:—"The bishop having blessed the frankincense, puts it into the censer, and, sprinkling the cross with holy water, fumes it with incense; and then, kneeling before the cross, he devoutly ADORES [*adorat*] and kisses it; and thus do all who are so disposed."

And what sort of adoration is intended to be thus offered to the cross is most plainly declared in the same Pontifical, and that is no other, no less holy and divine a worship and adoration, than is offered to the Almighty God Himself, namely, the worship of LATRIA. Thus, in the prescribed order for receiving an emperor into a city, the Pontifical directs, that "The emperor, either on horseback, or, what is more correct, dismounting and kneeling on a carpet, kisses the cross. But if it be the Pope's legate that meets the

emperor, or enters the city with him, he who bears the sword before the emperor, and another carrying the legate's cross, ought to go together; the legate's cross (inasmuch as SUPREME DIVINE WORSHIP is due to it [*latrīa*]) will be on the right, the emperor's sword on the left."*

In the consecration of an image of the blessed Virgin, the prayers and anthems addressed to the Virgin herself are interspersed with prayers to God; and, as in the case of the cross, the image is to be sprinkled with holy water, anointed with chrism, and fumed with incense; and then among other supplications are these:—

"Confirm, O God, our benediction, and sanctify this form of the blessed Virgin Mary, which carries the figure of Thy only Incarnate Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, so that it may remain blessed, and bring the succour of saving help to Thy faithful; that thunders and lightnings, and destructive blasts, if they prevail, may be more speedily driven away; that the flood of rains also, and the interruption of fine weather, or the tumult of civil wars, or the ravages of infidels, may be suppressed at its presence; that the abundance of peace and all safety, and of the fruits of the earth also, may be multiplied wherever the presence of this image may be at hand; not less that the mortality of animals may at Thy bidding cease: and may satisfaction be given to all who shall shew it reverence, and utter their prayers to Thee before it; and to them, after the course of this life is finished, may the entrance of the heavenly Paradise be opened. Grant that, by the prayers of the same most holy [Virgin], whosoever shall take diligent heed suppliantly to honour the same Queen of Mercy and our most glorious Lady before the face of this image, may be rescued from present dangers, and, in the sight of thy Divine Ma-

jesty, obtain pardon for what they have committed, and what they have left undone," &c.*

When we see such superstitions habitually recognised and established, fostered and propagated, by solemn religious services performed by the chief pastors of the Roman Catholic Church, within the very sanctuary of the house of prayer, we cannot wonder at finding the same superstitions, multiplied and increased in magnitude, possessing themselves of every part of the Lord's heritage; keeping down, and concealing, and choking the pure word of God and the precious doctrines of salvation, and establishing themselves in their place. That word struggled for a time, but was ultimately borne down, till it pleased the Lord of the vineyard, in his own good time, to restore it, when at length He rescued us and our branch of the Holy Catholic Church from the thraldom of Rome. But for ages the results of this superstition were severely felt.

Among the many testimonies, with which our histories abound to the overflow, of the tendencies of this superstition to check and stifle true religion and pure piety, and to take its place, the remarks of Polydore Vergil, who flourished in the end of the fifteenth, and the early part of the sixteenth century, deserve much consideration. The work here quoted seems to have been first published A. D. 1499. He is not a person who had taken part against the introduction and worship of images; on the contrary, he speaks in no measured terms of those who would dare to act or even think against the decrees of the Roman Church on that point; and yet, speaking of what took place in his own time—what he witnessed himself, and what was going on when he wrote,—he uses the expressions

* See also *Pontificale Romanum*, A. D. 1818, part ii. pp. 152, 153.

which we shall now quote. His introductory passages, indeed, would scarcely have prepared us for the practical conclusion: in one half-page he seems to embody and concentrate all the heads of argument that can be urged with Romanists against the worship of images. His opening words are these:—*

“Of the origin of images we have spoken in our second book: here let us speak of their worship; which worship not only persons ignorant of our religion, but, as Jerome beareth witness, almost all the old holy Fathers have condemned, through fear of idolatry, than which there can be no more execrable crime; for since, as John says, ‘no one has seen God at any time,’ what form shall we give to him? though Moses says, ‘God made man; in the image of God made He him.’ This does Eusebius† wisely refer to the soul; while John of Damascus strives to distort the same to the form of the body, when he is pleading the cause of worshipping images of this sort. Yet Moses inculcates nothing more strongly (as is evident from many passages as well of Exodus as Leviticus) than that the people should venerate nothing made with hands. And the prophet says, ‘Confounded be all who adore graven things and boast in their images.’ Saint Gregory, too, reproves Serenus, Bishop of Marseilles, (as we read in the Canonical Decrees, and as he himself, in the ninth epistle of the ninth book, testifies,) because he had broken the images; and praises him because he had forbidden them to be worshipped.”

We have said that we should scarcely expect Polydore Vergil’s chapter on images to close as it does.

* Polydor. Vergil, *De Invent. Rerum*, lib. vi. c. xiii. (ed. Basiliæ, 1546.) p. 425.

† *De Præpar. Evang.*, lib. ii.

For in his conclusion he says that the worship of them is against Holy Scripture and almost all the Fathers of the Church, as a dangerous step towards idolatry; and yet he asks, "Who is so bold, after the decree of the Church, to refuse compliance with her decrees?" however gross may be the abuses which he himself describes in such strong colours as would be rejected for an exaggeration, or even a fable, had it been stated by one of our own Church. This only adds another to the unnumbered proofs, that, if once a man gives himself over implicitly to the Church of Rome, the Holy Scriptures and the voice of Christian antiquity will plead with him in vain against her most novel or most perilous decrees. The closing portions of this writer (too honest not to confess that Rome now is not what Rome was when the doctrine of Scripture and of the Fathers prevailed, and yet too weak to hold to Scripture and the Fathers against the decrees of a degenerate Church) we must now cite.

Having, as all others do, rested the justification and obligation of the worship of images chiefly on the second Council of Nice, he says:—"Who, then, is so abandoned and possessed of such rashness, as positively to doubt or to dream, not to say entertain a sentiment or a thought on the worship of images different from what has been long ago established by the decree of so many most holy Fathers? Nevertheless, this may most especially be desired, that the priests should more frequently teach the people in what way they ought both to venerate such sort of images and offer their gifts before them; for because they are silent on this point, and are thought to be silent for their own interest, to such a pass of madness have things come, that this part of piety differs little from impiety. For

there are very many of the ruder and more stupid class, who worship images of stone, or wood, or marble, or brass, or painted on the walls, and drawn in various colours, not as being signs, but just as though the images themselves had some feeling; and they place more trust in them than in Christ, or in those saints to whom the images are dedicated. Whence it arises, that, heaping folly on folly, they offer to them gold, silver, rings with precious stones, and all kinds of gems, destined to perish there by age. And, in order that so many more may be allured to do so, they who reap such a harvest pierce the pieces of money, and by a thread suspend them hanging on the neck or the hands of the images themselves, and place the donations honourably in conspicuous places, and affix notifications by which the names of those who offer them may be the more known to gods and men. Thus a good portion of men are induced by these means to be the more foolish; and, moreover, sometimes to complete long journeys for the purpose of visiting one petty image, and there leaving their donations, neglecting every other duty, whether of piety or of charity; concluding that they have entirely made a sufficiently bountiful expenditure, and have repented enough, if, for living more luxuriously on their journey, they offered gold, into whatever person's pocket it was afterwards to go. How much more wise, how much more religious would it be, for one to go on his travels with a view to bring the body into subjection by labour, so that it might be compelled to obey reason; and to venerate images, so as that the mind might forthwith be directed to God: and to make presents which might be of service to the poor, since, beyond doubt, those gifts are acceptable to God?"

PART II.

DECREES OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT, AND THE CREED
OF POPE PIUS: THEIR TRUE INTENT AND MEANING.

CHAPTER I.

COUNCIL OF TRENT.

WE have seen, that, on the Anglo-Saxon Church, which had previously been kept free from such superstition, the decrees of the second Council of Nice (A. D. 787) were imposed, against the remonstrance and to the great grief and dejection of the English prelates, and of the chief persons of the kingdom. We have learned also from a writer in full communion with the Church of Rome, himself a supporter of those decrees, what bitter fruits of superstition and impiety the novel and foreign doctrines produced through the country; how direct a tendency they had to countenance and foster an undevotional, an uncharitable, and an uncontrite spirit; how vast was the additional peril which they introduced of substituting outward acts and prescribed forms, and offerings of temporal good things, in place of a lowly, penitent, bruised, and obedient heart, and self-denial and self-abasement. We are now to inquire what was the true intent and meaning of the decrees of the Council of Trent, and of the equally binding Creed of Pope Pius IV.; whether any and what changes in doctrine or practice in this particular point of image-worship were effected by that

council, as we find its decrees maintained by the accredited interpreters of its acts.

And here it cannot fail to strike every one, even on a cursory view of the rules, and orders, and modifications, restrictions, and cautions, and prohibitions, specifically appended to those decrees, that the evils which we have already contemplated (as the natural fruits of such a superstition) were become crying evils, known to the council as having given scandal through Christendom, and which no longer admitted of being passed over in silence. Polydore Vergil, for example, tells us, as we have seen, that the priests were negligent in teaching their flocks the true worship of images; that their silence was attributed to the harvest which they reaped from the ignorance and superstition of the people; and that for lucre they condescended to unworthy and base expedients for alluring people to flock to the shrines and bring their offerings. He tells us that the deluded worshippers addressed the images as beings possessed of sense, and put greater trust in the images than in God; that they thought the liberality of their gifts a sufficient satisfaction for self-indulgence and luxurious living even on their pilgrimages, without further thought of penitence and charity; and all this he attributes to the culpable and self-interested silence of the priests, who ought to teach the people better. And what confirmation, or contradiction, or palliation is given to these statements at Trent? To meet these crying evils, the council prescribes, that, in the worship of images,*

* Session XXV., which began on the 3rd and ended on the 4th of December, 1563.

“All disgraceful gains be banished.

“That all lascivious wantonness in the forms and ornaments of the images be forbidden.

“That men do not abuse the celebrations of the saints, and the visiting of their relics, for purposes of revellings and drunkenness, as though the feast-days in honour of the saints were to be passed in luxury and lasciviousness.

“That no unwonted image be admitted into any church without the permission of the bishop; nor without the same consent ANY NEW MIRACLES ALLOWED, or any new relics to be received.”

The Decree to which these restrictions and cautions are appended is as follows, under the title

“CONCERNING THE SACRED IMAGES.”*

“The images of Christ, and the Virgin Mother of God, and other saints are to be most especially had and retained in churches, and to them due honour and veneration is to be offered.”

To this decree are added, by way of explanation, the following sentences, which on various accounts require our especial attention in this place, before we examine the decree itself as to its true intent and meaning:—

“Not because any divinity or virtue is believed to be in them, on account of which they are to be worshipped, or because anything is to be asked from them, or because trust is to be placed in images, as was formerly done by the Gentiles, who placed their

* In the catechism composed in obedience to the Council of Trent, and published under the sanction of Pope Pius V., there is nothing which throws any additional light on this decree, or removes any doubt or difficulty.—Paris, 1671, p. 319.

hope in idols, but since the honour which is shewn to them is referred to the prototypes which they represent; so that by the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover our head, and fall prostrate, we adore Christ, and venerate the saints whose likeness they bear—a point sanctioned against the oppugners of images by the decrees of councils, and most especially the second Synod of Nice."

On these explanations it must be observed, that, from the very first introduction of image-worship into the Church of Christ, its advocates have ever laboured with especial anxiety to establish a distinction between the worship of images in the Christian Church, and the worship of idols by the heathen. This anxiety has been naturally felt in order, if by any means, to escape from the prohibitions and denunciations of Holy Scripture against the making of any image, the likeness of any being in heaven or earth, for the purpose of worshipping it; and to escape also from the strong language which the earliest Fathers of the Church uniformly employed against idol or image worship. Various have been the subtle and refined distinctions by which it has been attempted to establish the difference; of these abundant specimens may be seen in Cardinal Bellarmin's treatises on the subject. But the distinction chiefly relied on, from the second Synod of Nice down to the Council of Trent, (which, as above, refers to that synod by name,) is this: that the heathen worshipped the material idols of wood, or stone, or brass, as being not the representatives of unseen deities, but as being themselves gods; and that, placing their trust in those visible and tangible idols, they did not refer their worship of the idol to the unseen deity whom it represented; whereas in

the Christian Church the worshipper regards the image as the representative of a saint or of God, and offers his worship beyond and through the image, to the divine or holy being whom it represents.

Now this is a most palpable fallacy. It is grounded upon an assumption not only without foundation, but absolutely contradictory to the most sure evidence of Scripture and of heathen times. The subject is of great importance, and will repay a patient and fair investigation, the result of which will be a conviction, that, instead of the worship of idols by the heathen and the worship of images by Christians being in this respect different, they are identically the same; that there is no such distinction maintainable between them —both being equally contrary to God's word, and both equally condemned by the doctrine and practice of the primitive Church of Christ. And this we must make the subject of a separate chapter.

CHAPTER II.

PAGAN WORSHIP OF IDOLS, AND THE ROMISH WORSHIP OF IMAGES,
THE SAME IN KIND.

THAT multitudes in the pagan world were so ignorant and blinded as to look only to their idols, without further reference to any unseen spiritual being whom those images visibly represented, there can be no doubt; but just so does Polydore Vergil say, when recording a state of things of which he was an eye-witness, that multitudes of Christians who frequented the images in his time, did, in consequence of the neglect of their spiritual teachers and pastors, place their trust in the images more than in the spiritual beings whom those images represented; and just so does the prophet Isaiah most powerfully and graphically pourtray the perversion and blindness of a pagan, who could fall down to a block of his own workmanship from the stock of a tree of his own rearing. But that the priests and the people in the heathen world generally regarded the idol as the visible representation of an absent and unseen deity, whose anger they must deprecate and whose favour they must propitiate, is made evident by all we learn not only from the records of the ancient heathen world, but also from what we read even in the Holy Scriptures themselves, and in the Fathers of the Primitive Church.

If, for example,* we look to that wonderful display of

* 1 Kings, xvii.

omnipotence when the Most High vindicated His own honour and exalted His glorious name above the fabled deities of paganism by the instrumentality and at the prayer of His faithful servant Elijah, we find, that, so far from the worshippers of Baal addressing their prayers to his idol without intending them to pass on through that outward form to the invisible power represented by it, they had not, as is evident, any visible idol at all before them. The image of Baal, together with other statues, was in the temple of Baal, and was not removed till eighteen years afterwards,* when Jehu destroyed it. The people came together to meet Elijah at Mount Carmel, and there builded an altar in an open space, and there they prayed to an invisible and absent deity. The irony of the prophet is unintelligible, if we for a moment suppose that they were addressing their cries to an image. It refers to a sensible, rational, and actively engaged Being. Instead of pointing to the object of their prayer as a deaf, and dumb, and motionless, and insensible material object, (having eyes yet seeing not, having ears yet hearing not, having a mouth yet speaking not, having feet yet walking not, with all of which defects in their idol Elijah might naturally and with power have upbraided the worshippers of Baal, had they then been calling upon an image of wood or stone,) he bids them renew and recite louder their appeals and cries to him, because he was in some distant place, too much engaged with mental and bodily employments, or too much wearied, to listen to their prayers already offered. “The prophets of Baal called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, ‘O Baal, hear

* 2 Kings iv.

us !' But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And it came to pass, that at noon Elijah mocked them, and said, 'Cry aloud, for he is a god ; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awakened.' This false god, to whom in the open air on Mount Carmel they offered their prayers and cried aloud, cutting themselves with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out upon them, was worshipped before his idol in the temple subsequently destroyed by Jehu ; and to say that these idolaters looked habitually to nothing, to no invisible being, beyond the wooden or stone image, is to contradict the most palpable evidence of this whole transaction. The heathen worshipped before the idol, believing the deity to be more immediately present there; just as the Romanists worship before the image of our blessed Saviour ; but, certainly, there is no reason for saying that the heathen, more than the Romanists, looked not beyond the visible image.

If, again, we direct our attention to the brief but most interesting and instructive account of what took place at Lystra immediately on the miraculous restoration of the lame man, the same inference must follow. The people, convinced that nothing short of divine power could, by a word, effect so wonderful and instantaneous a cure, shouted, in the speech of Lycaonia, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men !"^{*} And they called Barnabas Jupiter, and Paul Mercury. The statue of Jupiter was before their city ; and what did the priest of that image, and the people do ? They did not hurry to offer sacrifice

* Acts, xiv.

to the image, now that they believed the original and hitherto unseen deity, of which that was the visible representative, to be before their eyes. The image, as the memorial of its absent and invisible prototype, they no longer regarded; but they hastened to the gates of the house where Paul and Barnabas were, with oxen and garlands, to offer sacrifice to them as the original powers, the image of one of whom was especially worshipped before their city. Had they habitually regarded the image as the god whom they worshipped and in whom they trusted, their conduct is strange and unaccountable; if they habitually intended their worship to pass beyond the image to the original,—the prototype,—the living being represented by it, their behaviour is plain, and intelligible, and natural.

Another example we have in the case of the opposition to the Apostles raised in Ephesus by Demetrius the silversmith, who wrought the silver chapels or shrines for the images of Diana. The people of Ephesus boasted that they were worshippers of the great goddess Diana, and especially of that image of her which (as their mythology fabled) fell down from Jupiter. But, with the same voice, they shouted, that all Asia and the world worshipped the same Diana;—not the image that fell down from Jupiter and was kept in her temple at Ephesus, but that Diana whose images Demetrius made for her shrines, and whose images were to be found in every city around. The divinity was one, though they worshipped her before and through unnumbered images; just as the advocates of image-worship adore the same Virgin, whether the image before which they fall is at

Rome, or Einsiedlin, or Loretto, or any other favourite place of her worship.

And this is the precise view presented to us by those Christian writers who argued with the heathen against their idol-worship. Lactantius, for example, in his elaborate work against false religion and every species of idolatry, having summed up an argument thus, “What madness, then, is it for men to make things which they must afterwards fear, or to fear what they have made!” quotes the answer, excuse, defence, or explanation usually made by idolaters in his time, when charged with worshipping and adoring insensible and lifeless images, that he might expose its futility. This defence and explanation is entirely identifiable with the defence and explanation made throughout by the second Council of Nice and by the Council of Trent, and from that time down to our own days. It may, moreover, be observed in passing, though the fact belongs to a later branch of our inquiry, that the ancient Christian writers speak of the image-worship of the heathen in such unqualified terms (without making any distinctions or exceptions as to the images of saints, and the Virgin, and Christ) as not to leave any room for doubt, that, when they wrote, images had gained no place in the worship of Christians. Their sweeping condemnation of material objects of worship is universal; and their language, in pronouncing that condemnation, is equally applicable to the images worshipped in Christian churches now, and to the idols worshipped in the pagan temples then. The plea or defence made by idol-worshippers, as cited by Lactantius, is this:—“We fear not the things which we form and fashion, but those Beings to whose

* Lact. *Divin. Instit.*, lib. ii. cap. ii.

image and likeness they are formed and fashioned, and to whose names they are consecrated." *

The arguments with which Lactantius presses them on this their explanation and defence, are much to our point:—

" That is to say, you therefore fear, because you think those beings in heaven; and surely, if they are gods, it cannot be otherwise. Why, then, do you not raise your eyes to heaven? and, calling on their names, offer your sacrifices in the open air? Why do you look chiefly to your walls, and blocks of wood and stone, rather than to that place where you believe them to be? What mean the temples and the altars? What, in a word, mean the images, which are memorials of beings either absent or present? For, at all events, the idea of forming likenesses was for this reason invented by men, that the memory might be preserved of those who were either withdrawn by death or separated by absence. In which class, then, shall we reckon the gods? If in the class of the dead, who is so great a fool as to worship them? if in the class of the absent, they are consequently not to be worshipped, if they neither see what we do, nor hear what we pray. But, if the gods cannot be absent, (who, since they are divine, in whatever part of the world they be, see and hear all things, since they are everywhere present,) images

* The explanations of the Council of Trent and of these idolaters, when placed side by side, are remarkably identical.

Idolaters in the Fourth Century.

Non ista [quæ finximus] timemus, sed eos ad quorum imaginem ficta, et quorum nominibus consecrata sunt.

The Council of Trent, 1563.

Honos qui eis [imaginibus] exhibetur refertur ad prototypa quæ illæ representant.

are evidently superfluous; for, unquestionably, it is enough to call in prayer on the names of those who hear. Yet, though present, [you say,] they are not at hand, except at their images. Evidently so; just as the common people suppose that the souls of the dead hover about the tombs and remains [relics] of their bodies. Nevertheless, as soon as the god begins to be present, there is no longer any need of his image."

Much more to the same effect may be added.* We are aware that Lactantius is under a cloud in the minds of many in the Church of Rome; but, as a witness of a matter of fact, whatever be the court, his testimony is without blemish and unassailable.

He says, without any reservation, "It is not doubtful, that, wherever an image is, there is no religion."† Could he have said this, if images had any place in his day in the worship of Christians? Were he a heretic, and images had been worshipped by the orthodox, he must have charged them as being guilty of the same religious crime with Pagans. But neither he nor any Christian writer of his time seems to have been in the slightest degree aware of any image being admitted into the Christian churches, or being an object of religious honour.

* Cardinal Bellarmin tries to make a distinction between *idola* on the one hand, and *simulacra* and *imagines* on the other. But in these elaborate works, Lactantius, when speaking of heathen idols, uses the words *simulacra* and *imagines* — the very words used now for the images at present worshipped, unholy as we maintain, in the Church of Rome. He also uses the word "colere" for "to worship," when he speaks of the worship of pagan idols; the very word now used by Roman Catholics with reference to the images which they say should be worshipped.

† Lib. ii. cap. xix. Quare non est dubium, quin nulla religio sit ubicunque simulacrum est.

The same conclusion follows from our examination of other ancient writers. Among the rest, Origen, in a passage which we shall cite hereafter,* contrasts the religious knowledge of those heathen who declared it was not the material image which they worshipped, with the clearer views of the most unlearned among Christians. Gregory of Nyssa, too, when charging home their inconsistency on those who, though they denied the eternity and entire Godhead of Christ, yet worshipped Him, tells them that they were worshipping an idol ; though in this case there could be no reference to a visible image, but only to the Son of God in heaven.†

A passage in St. Ambrose's "Epistle to Valentinean" can convey no other than the same notion of the professed views of the heathen :—

" This gold, if it be carefully handled, has an outward value ; but, inwardly, it is mere ordinary metal. Examine, I pray you, and sift thoroughly the class of the Gentiles. The words they utter are rich and grand ; the things they defend are utterly devoid of truth : **THEY TALK OF GOD—THEY ADORE AN IMAGE.**"

But, were all other proofs of the utter hollowness of this attempted distinction wanting, St. Augustine himself would supply abundant evidence on the point to satisfy any unprejudiced mind. Words cannot speak more clearly than his ; and they prove that precisely the selfsame argument which the decrees of the Council of Trent and more recent writers plead in behalf of image-worship now, as contradistinguished from the worship of their idols by the heathen, those very heathen (against whose folly Au-

* Cont. Cels., lib. vi. cap. xiv.

† Cont. Eunom., Orat. ii. vol. ii. p. 450.

gustine wrote) pleaded in behalf of their own worship of idols: "We do not put our trust in the material image," say both equally, "but we look beyond the image, to that unseen being of whom the image is the visible representative."

It is, moreover, remarkable, that, as the decrees of Trent and the supporters of image-worship now urge this attempted distinction in proof that their religion is free from the folly and impiety of idolatry, so the idolaters in St. Augustine's time urged the same distinction, in proof that theirs was a more pure and refined religion than the superstition of those who placed their trust in the material idols, and looked to no being beyond or through them. The passage we must quote at greater length when we examine the general evidence of St. Augustine: a few sentences will suffice here.* Having dwelt on the preposterous folly of men worshipping the works of their own hands, and having urged against them arguments equally applicable to image-worship in the Church of Rome, he proceeds:—"But those persons seem to themselves to belong to a more purified religion, who say, 'I worship neither the image nor a demon; but I regard the bodily figure as the representation of that being whom I ought to worship.' And they so interpret their images as to say that by one is signified the earth, whence they are wont to call it the temple of Tellus; by another the sea, as by the image of Neptune; by another fire, as Vulcan; by another the day-star, as Venus; by another the sun; by another the moon; on the images of which they impose the same names, as they do of the earth; on one this, on another that star, or this or that creature; for we are unable

* Vol. iv. p. 1261; on Psalm, cxiii. part ii.

to enumerate all. And when, again, they begin with regard to these to be pressed hard on the point that they worship bodies, they are bold enough to answer, that they do not worship the bodies themselves, but the divinities which preside over and rule them."

These excuses seem to have been constantly made, and to have been very familiar to St. Augustine. Thus, on Psalm xcvi., he says: "But some disputant comes forward, and, very wise in his own opinion, says, 'I do not worship that stone, nor that insensible image. Your prophet could not know that "they have eyes and see not," and I be ignorant that that image neither hath a soul, nor sees with his eyes, nor hears with his ears. I do not worship that, but I adore what I see, and serve him whom I do not see.' And who is he? —a certain invisible divinity which presides over that image."*

In another place, he says,† "And, lest any one should say, 'I do not worship the image, but that which the images signify,' it is immediately added, 'And they worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator!' Now, understand this well: they either worship the image or a creature. He who worships the image converts the truth of God into a lie."

* Vol. iv. p. 1047.

† Serm. excvii. vol. v. p. 905.

CHAPTER III.

THE TRIDENTAL DECREE.

WE were led into the examination carried on through the last chapter in consequence of the distinction attempted to be established by the Council of Trent between the worship of images by Christians and the worship of idols by heathens; and we have found that the distinction is utterly groundless. We must now examine the positive decree, and ascertain in what sense it was intended to be accepted and acted upon.

The words of the decree are these:—

“ Moreover, the images of Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God, and of other saints, are most especially to be had and retained in churches, and due honour and veneration must be rendered to them, not because any divinity is believed to be in them, or virtue for which they are to be worshipped; or because anything is to be asked from them; or because trust is to be placed in them, *as formerly was done by the Gentiles, who placed their hope in idols*; but because the honour shewn to them is referred to the prototypes which they represent; so that, by the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover our head and fall prostrate, we adore Christ, and venerate the saints whose likenesses they bear—the same thing which is sanctioned by the decretēs of councils, especially of the second Nicene Council, against the oppugners of images.”

On the first part of this decree no doubt can arise. The churches in communion with Rome (however contrary to the faith and practice of the Primitive Church the command may prove to be) must have images; and to those images due honour and veneration must be rendered. On the latter clause a question of no small moment must be entertained and decided, before we can fully understand the subject of image-worship; namely, the question, In what does that due honour and veneration consist?

The bull of Pope Pius IV., published the year after the council, and which is of equal authority with the decrees of that council, contributes no additional light on this subject, its words merely being, "I most firmly assert, that the images of Christ and of the Mother of God, always a Virgin, and of other saints, are to be had and retained, and that to them due honour and veneration must be rendered."

It must be observed here, that, by an oversight, and confusion, which in such a point one should scarcely have expected,* Dr. Wiseman asserts: "The Council of Trent does not decree that we are obliged to use them [images]; it only says that it is wholesome to have them, and that they are to be treated with respect,—with a relative respect, that is, such as is shewn to the portrait of a father, or of any one whom we esteem or reverence."

How far this "relative respect," or filial reverence shewn to a father's portrait, falls short of the reverence and worship and adoration taught by the saints and doctors of his Church, even among those who took a prominent lead in the Council of Trent, and enjoyed the greatest confidence of its members, we shall see hereafter: but how mistaken a representation of the decree

* London, 1836. Lecture xiii. vol. ii. p. 130.

of that council is here put forth in so unqualified a manner by Dr. Wiseman, may be seen by the very words of the decree, which are, as to the point before us, these :—

“The council commands all bishops and others discharging the office and cure of instruction . . . diligently to instruct the faithful; teaching them . . . that the holy bodies of the holy martyrs, and of others living with Christ, which were living members of Christ, and a temple of the Holy Ghost to be by Him raised up to eternal life and glorified, are to be venerated by the faithful, by which [bodies (*per quæ*)] many benefits are conferred on mankind; so that they who affirm that veneration and honour is not owed to the relics of the saints, or that they [the relics (*eas*)] and other sacred monuments are uselessly honoured by the faithful, and that the tombs or shrines [*memorias*] of the saints are in vain frequented for the purpose of obtaining their help, are altogether to be accursed, as the Church long ago has accursed and now also accurses them: moreover, that the images of Christ and the Virgin Mother of God, and of other saints, are to be most especially had and retained in churches, and due honour and veneration is to be given to them.”

The words of the decree are as imperative here as in the former clause, to which a curse on all who hold a contrary doctrine is appended. The words of Dr. Wiseman, to be correct, require in the second clause a negative, which he has omitted; and in the first the absence of the negative, which he has inserted. “The council **DOES** decree that we are obliged to use them: it does **NOT** only say that it is wholesome to have them.”

What the honour due to images is, forms a question

which Cardinal Bellarmin* discusses at great length ; but from his discussion no satisfaction can arise to a mind anxious to be guided to the truth. He maintains that images are to be worshipped and adored ; and he states the several opinions entertained on the nature of the worship and adoration ; and he adopts the most refined and subtle distinctions of worship into :—

1. Adoration when it is offered to, 1st, an object on its own account ; and, 2ndly, when it is offered on account of some other object.

2. When it is offered, 1st, absolutely and in itself ; and, 2ndly, when accidentally, as in conjunction with some other things.

3. When it is offered, 1st, as due to the object itself ; and, 2ndly, when it is offered to one object in place of another, or as that other's representative.

In refining on these distinctions, he seems so entirely to forget the broad and fundamental principles of reason and of revelation, that we cannot but agree with one of his continental readers when many years ago he made this annotation :—“ He is at child's play.” (*Ludit pueriliter.*)

However, the three chief opinions among Roman Catholics which Bellarmin reviews are these :—First, That the faithful ought to do no more than worship before the image ; and to worship not the image but the prototype, the exemplar, the original, the Being of which the image is the representation.

This opinion Bellarmin rejects, and substitutes in its stead the following :—“ Images of Christ and the saints are to be venerated not merely accidentally and in connexion with anything else, but absolutely and in them-

* The preface to Bellarmin's controversial works was read at Rome, A.D. 1576, only thirteen years after the close of the Council of Trent.

selves; not merely on account of something else, but on their own account. So that the reverence shall rest in the images themselves considered absolutely in themselves; and not only as the representatives of some other being." One argument by which he defends this view is, that the consecration of the image gives it a right in itself, and not only as the representative of another, to be worshipped.

The second opinion (to which our attention will be presently more especially directed) mentioned by Bellarmin as having been maintained by Thomas Aquinas, Cajetan, Bonaventura, and several others, is, "That the honour due to the image is the same with the honour due to the Original, of which it is the image; so that to the image of Christ the supreme worship [*latria*] is due; to the image of the Virgin the worship called *hyperdulia*, and to the image of a saint the worship of *dulia*."

Against this opinion Bellarmin objects only so far as not to allow that *latria*, or the highest worship of the Supreme Being, can be directly, and on their own account, given to images, one of his chief reasons being this: "To say that the image of Christ, or the cross, is to be adored with the highest and supreme worship, is very dangerous; for the advocates of the doctrine are driven to employ most subtle distinctions, which they can scarcely understand themselves, much less the unlearned people." But in the very next section Bellarmin maintains, "That, though not both in itself and on account of itself, yet that either* accidentally or in connexion and with reference to the principal and exemplar, the image of Christ may be honoured, worshipped, and adored with the very selfsame worship

* "Impropius vel per accidens," &c.

with which we adore Christ."* It is difficult to see how these distinctions of Bellarmin are free from the danger which he points out in others; at least the whole appears an awful trifling in things concerning the soul. " *Ludit pueriliter.*" He is at child's play.

The third opinion which Bellarmin cites, as being a doctrine midway between the two former, is, " That images are to be worshipped both in themselves and on their own account, but yet with a worship inferior to that which is due to the original, whatever that original be."

This seems to be the doctrine which he is disposed to espouse as his own; and yet, in announcing it, he employs such refinement with regard to analogical and reductive worship, as to leave the ordinary reader in doubt of his meaning; except thus far, that the images of Christ, of the Virgin, and of the saints are to be honoured with a real and substantial worship, on their own account and in themselves; yet still a worship in each case bearing a relative or proportionate, and analogical reference to the original. He states his argument thus: — " The same ratio which the image bears to the original, the worship of the image bears to the worship of the original. But the image is in *some limited sense*,† and analogically, identifiable with its original; therefore the worship of the image is the same with the worship due to the original, but analogical and imperfect."

It is painful to make such a review of Cardinal Bellarmin and others; not only because it is distressing to witness so much unsound argument involved in the

* Bellarmin, in this single (23rd) section, applies indiscriminately to images the words worship (*cultus*), honour (*honos*), veneration (*veneratio*), and adoration (*adoratio*).

† " *Secundum quid.*"

mystery of so much apparent learning, (such abortive struggles to support a cause rotten to the core, by men who might have employed their talents and attainments efficiently in the cause of truth,) but also because there is a fear lest the reader might be withdrawn in disgust by a contemplation of such subtleties from pursuing the subject to the end.

At all events, three points are made clear by this brief reference to Bellarmin. First, that there are irreconcilable differences on the subject of image-worship among Romanists themselves; secondly, that, when once men will suffer themselves to be wedded to a theory inconsistent with the word of God, and the belief and practice of the primitive Church, they must have recourse to means of defending their dogmas which are equally at variance with the common sense of mankind, and with the simple faith of a sincere Christian; and, thirdly, we are here confirmed in the assurance, that, let image-worship be guarded by whatever stringent rules can be devised, let it be fenced by whatever distinctions casuistry may invent, it must at last come to the selfsame worship of the material object as the pagans offered to their idols; it is, by the testimony of Scripture and of the Primitive Church, a heathen branch grafted on Christian worship, and, like its parent stock, it will bring forth the fruits of idolatry and paganism.

The reader will bear in mind, that the point immediately before us is, to ascertain in what sense the Council of Trent intended its decree to be binding on all persons in communion with Rome, when it pronounced "that the images of Christ, of the Virgin, and of the saints are to be kept in churches, and that due honour and veneration is to be offered to them."

CHAPTER IV.

REAL MEANING OF THE TRIDENTINE DECREE.

SECTION I.

TOWARDS forming a correct view of the meaning of any positive enactment, a knowledge of the laws in existence—not dormant, but practically in operation—before the passing of the new law, is of great importance. If the new law, in its preamble, declares it to be expedient to repeal the previous laws, or amend the practice, we must interpret the enacting clauses with that intention of the legislature in view; if, on the contrary, the preamble of the new law approves and affirms the previous laws, and their practical enforcement by the decisions of the courts, and expresses the intention of the legislature to ratify only and strengthen, and give greater force to them, then we must interpret the enacting clauses after taking a retrospective view of what were the judgments and rulings of the most approved judges in the preceding times. The latter of these two is the case before us. The Council of Trent was only repeating what the Church of Rome declared to be the old faith and discipline of Christendom. It becomes, then, necessary for us to see how her most approved teachers taught the people to use and worship images. We might refer with equal ease to others, but we think it here enough to quote the judgments of Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura, and Lyndwode.

Thomas Aquinas, to whom we must hereafter refer, distinctly maintains, that the images are to be wor-

shipped themselves with the selfsame adoration with which the original being, whom the image in each case represents, is adored: and as distinctly he holds, "that the image of Christ is to be worshipped with the supreme adoration exclusively appropriated to God only." This doctor was canonized, and is now prayed to in the public worship of the Church of Rome.

But, perhaps, even the sanction given to his name and works is surpassed by the terms in which another canonized saint of the Church of Rome has been extolled. It is impossible to conceive any human being, or any body of men, to have given more unequivocally, or more unreservedly, the full weight of their authority to the work of any man, than the Church of Rome has given hers to Bonaventura as a teacher, and to his works as containing her authoritative teaching. He was canonized by Pope Sixtus IV., A. D. 1482, about two centuries after his death: and that Pope declares him "to have so written on divine subjects, that the Holy Spirit seems to have spoken in him." More than a century after his canonization, A. D. 1588, Pope Sixtus V. ordered his works to be "most carefully emended." This Pope's decretal letters pronounce Bonaventura to be an acknowledged doctor of the Holy Church, and direct his authority to be cited and employed in all places of education, and in all ecclesiastical discussions and studies: at the same time, plenary indulgence, (that is, a full and free pardon in this world and the next from all their sins,) on certain conditions appended, is offered to all who are present at the mass on his festival. And what, on the subject of image-worship, does this saint of the Church of Rome teach all Christians to regard as the doctrine of that Church? Again and

again are we driven to ask, Are there not two Churches of Rome? Can the Church (claiming itself, in the matter of canonization, to be infallible) which canonized Bonaventura, be that Church of which Dr. Baines, who consecrated in 1826 the Roman Catholic chapel at Bradford, in Yorkshire, was a bishop, and of which the present Dr. Wiseman is a bishop? that Church which gains proselytes (more than by any other means) by the assumed, but unfounded fact, that at least that Church is at unity with itself—that there is no essential discrepancy in its doctrines? What can be more antagonistic, more irreconcilable, more utterly inconsistent one with the other, than such doctrines as we heard in England a very few years ago from the Roman Catholic bishops, and the doctrines of many other of her doctors and saints? Contrast only the doctrine of Bishop Wiseman in London, and Bishop Baines in Yorkshire, with the following doctrine of that saint of their Church, whom the Pope who canonized him declared to have spoken on divine subjects as though the Holy Spirit had spoken in him. We quote the words of Bonaventura from the very edition of his works published in Rome at the close of the sixteenth century, in the very printing-house of the Vatican, prepared, and, "with few exceptions, printed in the time of Sixtus V.," but not published till the Pontificate of Clement VIII. ;* and, these are Bonaventura's words on the question, "Is the worship of LATRIA to be given to the image of Christ?—Conclusion: The image of Christ is to be adored with the adoration of LATRIA, because it represents Him who was crucified for us, and the image presents itself for Him."

The reader will bear in mind, that the worship of

* Rome; 1596. Vol. v. p. 112; lib. iii. dist. ix. quæst. 2.

latria is the highest conceivable worship, to be paid only to the One only God, the Creator and Governor of the world ; and the preceding question is, “ Must that worship and service be offered to the image of Christ ? ” and the following question is, “ Must that same worship be offered to the cross ? ”

“ Question : Is the worship of *Latria* to be given to the cross of Christ ? — Conclusion : Every cross is to be adored with the adoration of *latria* ; but to that on which Christ hung another reverence also is to be paid . ”

These conclusions Bonaventura establishes by several arguments, answering supposed objections.

Among these “ supposed objections,” arguments are found, some of which throw much light upon the general views of Bonaventura. Thus, to prove that the highest divine worship due to the Supreme Being is due also to the image of Christ, he says, “ A man speaks to the image in his petitions, therefore he speaks to the image as to a rational creature ; therefore he speaks to the image as to Christ ; and just as he speaks, so he worships and adores ; and therefore he ought to adore the image of Christ, as he does Christ.”

Again, he thus argues, with the same view :—“ We pay the same reverence, and we ought to pay the same reverence, to the image of the Blessed Virgin, as we pay to the Virgin herself, and so of other saints ; therefore, the same reverence is to be paid to the image of Christ, as to Christ himself ; but the honour of supreme divine worship [*latria*] is paid to Christ, therefore it ought to be paid to His image.”*

Thus this canonized man, whom the Pope who made

* These passages in the edition of 1609, Mogunt., are found vol. v. p. 100.

him a saint declares to have spoken as though the Holy Spirit spoke in him, maintains, as the unquestionable doctrine of the Church of Rome, "that the selfsame worship and adoration which Christians are bound to pay to Christ the Lord, the same they are equally bound to pay to His image, and to the representation of His cross."

That this was the generally received doctrine in England between the days of Bonaventura and the Reformation, we draw abundant proof from various sources. Among other writers, Lyndwode, in his "Provinciale," deserves especial notice, because he is writing a comment on the ecclesiastical statutes and laws as they were interpreted and observed in his day; and he is always appealed to as one of highest authority. He lived in the time of our Henry V., in whose service he was an ambassador, when that king died at the castle of the Bois de Vincennes. After his royal master's decease, A. D. 1422, he resumed his duties as official in the court of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the year following he began his celebrated work. And on the subject under consideration, what evidence do we derive illustrative of the practical state of image-worship in his day?

He begins by quoting the ordinance of Robert Winchelsey, binding all rectors and parishioners in the province of Canterbury to provide certain things for the use of the church; and among other things specified are a cross for processions, a cross for the dead, images in the body of the church, and a principal image in the chancel.* On the word "images" the comment of Lyndwode, among other observations and interpretations, contains the following:—

* Oxon, 1679: pp. 252, 298.

“ The images of the saints are not to be despised, but reverenced ; yet the picture of the images themselves is not to be adored, but the thing represented by it. Know that, according to Joh. [de Athona ?] it is lawful to adore images not with the adoration of latria, but with the adoration of dulia ; for latria is a worship due to God alone, but dulia is a service due to a creature. We adore God by loving Him above all things, by believing in Him, by offering Him sacrifice, and paying Him reverence above all things. But we adore the cross and images by paying them reverence, not by believing in them, or loving them above all things, or offering them sacrifice ; this would be idolatry.”

After a very unprofitable discussion of the question, “ Whether the flesh of Christ is to be adored with the worship of latria,” he proceeds : “ But is the image of Christ to be adored with the worship of latria ? If the image is regarded merely as a certain thing, no honour is due to it, as neither to wood nor stone : but if it be regarded as an image, then (because there is the same movement towards the image, as an image, and to the Being represented by it) one and the same honour is due to the image and to the Being represented by it ; and, therefore, since Christ is adored with latria, His image ought likewise to be adored with latria. Nor does Exodus xx. stand in the way of this, where it is said, ‘ *Thou shalt not make to thyself an image, nor any graven similitude*,’ because that was forbidden for that time when God had not taken upon Him human nature ; for then, since God was altogether spirit, He was incapable of being represented by any figure. But it is otherwise after he assumed human nature.”

“ But lo ! concerning the cross of Christ, it is usually

doubted whether it is to be adored with the worship of latria. On which, say thou, that honour or reverence is not due except to a rational creature; for to an insensible thing it is not due, except in relation to a rational nature or creature, and that in two ways. If, then, the question is of the cross itself on which Christ was crucified, that cross is to be venerated by us in both ways; namely in one way, inasmuch as it represents the figure of Christ stretched upon it; in another way, from its having touched Christ's limbs, and because it was sprinkled with His blood. Wherefore, it is in both ways to be adored with the same adoration as Christ is, namely, with the adoration of latria; and, consequently, we address* the cross, and PRAY TO THE CROSS, as if to Christ Himself. But if they speak of the effigy of the cross of Christ, made of any other material, namely, of wood or stone, we venerate the cross just as we do the image of Christ, which we venerate with the worship of latria. Yet some say that the very cross of Christ itself, on which He hung, inasmuch as it is a certain thing, is not adored with the same adoration of latria with the Word, since it does not pertain to the person of the Word, as a part of Him; but with the adoration of hyperdulia, inasmuch as it is a certain thing belonging to Christ."

However refined may be these distinctions, and however positive the ruling of this great master of the Church of Rome, as to the obligation on believers to worship the image of Christ and the cross with supreme divine adoration, and however contradictory the sentiments of different writers had been, it was by no means left open for Christians to use images or not. On the contrary, to hold opinions against the rulings of the

* "Crucem alloquimur et deprecamur, quasi ipsum Christum."

Church, either openly or secretly, or even by a mere insinuation,* subjected a man to the name of a heretic, and to the pains and penalties of heresy. In the Council of Oxford, under Archbishop Arundel, one of the decrees contains the following strong clauses :—

“Let no one presume to dispute, publicly or secretly, on articles determined by the Church, and especially about the adoration of the glorious cross, the veneration of the images of the saints, or pilgrimages to their places or reliques; but by all henceforth let it be generally taught and preached, that the cross, and the image of the Crucified, and other images of the saints, to the memory and honour of those whom they represent, and their places and reliques, ought to be venerated by processions, kneelings, bowings, incensings, kissings, oblations, burnings of lights, pilgrimages, and also by any other modes and forms whatever, which have been customary in our own or our predecessors’ times. Any one who asserts, teaches, preaches, or obstinately insinuates the contrary, unless he repent in the mode and form elsewhere ordained by us, and abjure, as is there provided, let him incur the penalties of heresy and of a relapse, and such let him be declared to be for all the effect of law;” *i.e.*, says Lyndwode, “that he be punished with the punishment of a heretic and a relapse.”

And yet we are told, that all that the Roman Catholic Church teaches her children regarding images and pictures set up in churches, is to pay the same veneration and affection to them, as one would shew on coming before the picture or image of a friend whom one had loved and had lost. In the time of

* Lyndwode says, “to insinuate by a sign or a nod would be enough.”

Archbishop Arundel, the punishment of a heretic and relapse was to be burned alive ! *

Can we doubt what was the meaning of the Church of Rome in the fourteenth century ? But we must refer to another and even a closer test.

In the interpretation of a law, contemporaneous opinion and practice have always been considered useful and safe guides. Now, such a guide we have in interpreting the decree of the Council of Trent with regard to the worship and adoration of images in the Christian Church. Indeed, whether we look to the station and character and life of the individual witness personally, or to the peculiar circumstances under which his work was first sent out into the world, and, after ten years and more, republished, we shall, perhaps, find a difficulty in fixing upon any person whose evidence as to the meaning of a legislative enactment could be more unobjectionable and conclusive than is the testimony of Naclantus, Bishop of Clugium, on the true intent and meaning of the decree of the Council of Trent as to the nature of the honour and worship required to be paid to images by all who profess allegiance to the See of Rome.

James Nacchianti (for this was his Italian name) seems from his infancy to have been closely united with the most influential personages in the Roman Church. When a boy, he was schoolfellow of Pius V. at Bononia ; and afterwards, as a writer, he secured the countenance and support of the several Roman Pontiffs, from Julius III. down to his former fellow-student, Pius V. He was advanced to the bishopric of Clugium, the place anciently called Fossa

* 2 Hen. IV., c. 16.

Clodina, and in modern times Chiozza. He is represented as a man most renowned for the monuments of his learning which he bequeathed to posterity; and as a member of the Council of Trent, who “shone with no small lustre among his brethren, the fathers of that synod, to whom also they entrusted affairs of great moment; and the soundness of whose faith, moreover, was the subject of admiration and eulogy in the same assembly.” One remarkable circumstance renders this last record far more important and striking than it otherwise would have been. In the course of their proceedings, attention was especially fixed upon him as a theological writer, in consequence of a charge alleged against him of unsoundness of doctrine in the matter of tradition. But, after discussion, “his faith, hitherto unassailed,” was approved and applauded; and certainly the correctness of his views on the character of the worship and adoration due to images was never called in question.

Those opinions are especially stated in his “Commentary,” or, as he calls it, his “Enarrations on the Epistle to the Romans.” In order to set the right value on the importance of those opinions, as bearing on the question immediately before us, the circumstances under which they were first separately published, and afterwards edited with the rest of his works, must be borne in mind.

This “Commentary on the Romans” was first published while Lawrence Prioli was Doge of Venice; for to him as his prince, and to the senate of Venice, he inscribed that work, in a dedication which still heads the “Commentary.”* Lawrence Prioli is re-

* His commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians was published first, and was dedicated to Pope Julius III.

corded to have been doge from 1556 to 1559; so that the work was in the hands of divines, and of the public, at least fourteen years before the Tridentine decree on the worship due to images was passed.* The work, moreover, had been commented upon through Christendom, and had been taken notice of by name, and its real drift and meaning in this particular had been prominently put forward in the second book of the Homilies of the Church of England. And yet, seven years after these Homilies had been published, and four years after the decree for worshipping images had been enacted at Trent, Naclantus dedicated the new edition of his works to the reigning Pope, Pius V., in the year 1567. Immediately after the dedication, his editor, Petrus Fratinus, a Florentine of the order of Preachers, (out of which order Naclantus himself was taken into the episcopate,) among many other declarations of his learning, and fame, and successful victories over heretics, says, “ Of the erudition, and doctrine, and talents of so great a Father, there is nothing for us to say; since it has already become known, more bright than the sun, to the whole Christian Church, not to say the world. For who knows not, that, in the Tridentine Council, among so many most illustrious fathers, and most learned doctors, and most holy prelates and lights of the world, he, through so many years, shone out as a day-star among the twinkling stars? He may have many equals in learning and piety; but he, being superior to many, has no superior.”

* A contemporary English prelate (Bishop Jewel) tells us it was published in 1557; two years after, the same Bishop, in his answer to Mr. Harding, cited this work of Naclantus as utterly at variance with what that English champion of Romanism had asserted to be the doctrine of his Church.

We can scarcely conceive one whose sentiments will carry with them more authority as an accredited teacher of the Church of Rome. His dissertation on image-worship Naclantus appends to his comment on the 23rd verse of the first chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, "And they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things."

He begins by giving his view of the history of the opposition made to the use and worship of idols in the Christian Church, from the time when, according to the second Council of Nice, the Manichees and Marcions rejected them, to the time when, according to his unmeasured language, "The heresy, after it had been exploded by doctors and councils, was brought up again from hell by the Waldenses, and afterwards espoused by Wickliff and others," whom he calls heretics. He then asserts, on the authority of the second Nicene Council, as an indisputable fact, that images were used in the Church from the time of the Apostles, citing in evidence, as recorded by the same council, the testimony of Athanasius, Basil, Chrysostom, and other Fathers. And here we cannot but observe, that, whereas Naclantus, and the second Nicene Council, and others roundly assert that the religious use of images prevailed in the Church from the very time of the Apostles, others, equally strenuous advocates for retaining their use, confess that from the first it was not so, accounting for the delay in introducing them to the fear entertained by the early Christians either of offending the lately converted Jews, or else of tempting the converted Gentiles to idolatry. We are here driven to ask, whether any

stronger arguments are needed to discountenance and prohibit image-worship altogether through every age of the Church.*

It must, moreover, be remarked that Naclantus, and almost all others throw the responsibility of making these citations from the Fathers on that council, not taking it upon themselves: And no wonder that they do so, and also quote the same passages of the Old Testament which were there quoted; because the quotations from Scripture are such as a child can answer, and the citations from the Fathers are from spurious works, and not from the genuine productions of Athanasius, Basil, and Chrysostom.

Naclantus then affirms, that the images of the most Holy Trinity, of our Saviour, of the glorious cross, of the most Holy Mother, of angels, and all saints are of use in the Church; and (what he states to be the whole point of his dissertation) that due honour and worship must be offered to them.

Introducing his reader to this point, he says that the subject must be considered under three distinct points of view:

1. The image may be regarded in the light merely of a material figure,—metal, stone, wood, colour, and painting; and in this light the image (however beautiful in its design and execution) cannot be honoured, or worshipped.

2. Images may be regarded as things blessed and consecrated to God; and as soon as they are placed in a church,—even without a blessing or any further dedication,—to deprive them of their own honour is a crime to be accursed. Being placed in the church, they are not only images of those beings whom they represent,

* See Life of Gregory the Great, Opera, vol. iv. p. 285.

but are, moreover, in a peculiar manner joined to them; yea, and erected in their stead.

3. In the third place, they must be regarded in a strict sense as images, or similitudes and representations; and there being a mutual relation between the image and the original, (the image existing in the original as its foundation, on which its very existence as an image depends; and the original, or prototype, existing in the image in which it is seen, and, if the case require it, honoured,) it follows, that, when the question of adoration is entertained, the image is to be regarded not merely in its reference to the original, but more especially as in itself containing that original. “Wherefore it is wisely said, that the image is truly adored,” &c. “And since the one thing is not separated from the other, (for though the prototype [or original Being] is absolutely a different thing from the image, yet, since it shines forth in the image, it is not severed from it,) so neither is the worship or adoration of the two divided, but of both the worship and adoration is one and the same.” “*Wherefore, not only must it be confessed that the faithful in the Church do adore BEFORE the image, (as some, perhaps for caution sake, express themselves,) but also that they do WORSHIP THE IMAGE without any manner of scruple which you may suggest;* nay, moreover, they venerate the image with that worship with which they venerate its original; so that, if that original has to be adored with [supreme divine worship due only to God] latria, the image also is to be worshipped with latria; if that is to be adored with dulia or hyperdulia, this [the image] is equally to be adored with that kind of worship.”

Words cannot be selected and put together to express more strongly and plainly the practical result of

the whole ; though the nice distinctions and refined arguments by which that result is defended may be obscure, and to many minds unintelligible. This great authority in the Roman Church not only asserts that the faithful in the Church adore the image of Christ with the same worship with which they adore Christ Himself, but that this ought to be done. This is indeed a most awful statement, but it was not new : it had been held many years before by doctors and even canonized saints ; and whatever refinements and distinctions may be yet made,—however some, “for caution-sake,” may attempt to fence the worship of the Almighty against such encroachments ; the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas, and Bonaventura, and Naclantus will be the practical tenet of the people at large, who are taught to worship images. They may be instructed to declare that they intend to worship the spiritual being represented by the image ; but they will be led stealthily and unwarily to adore the image itself, at least quite as much as the pagans were ever led to worship and adore their idols. Image-worship has ever been, and must ever be, an offence, a stumbling-block, a snare, and a temptation. It is an offence, a stumbling-block, which, if suffered to remain, can never be avoided or surmounted ; it is a snare from which, when the soul is once entangled in it, there is no escape ; it is a temptation, to dally and parley with which, will end in our irretrievable seduction. The only safe course, dictated by sound reason and the word of God, by experience and by the testimony of all ages, is to remove the thing itself, once and for ever, and to allow it in the Church of Christ neither place nor name.

Before we leave the evidence borne by Naclantus to the true intent and meaning of the Council of Trent,

we may add, that, having attempted to draw distinctions, (the unsoundness of which few can at the first glance fail to detect,) he anticipates an objection, which, he conceives, some might take from the case of the Brazen Serpent. In answer to the supposed remark of an opponent, (to which we need not advert,) Naclantus pronounces, that, if the Israelites had looked to the brazen serpent with the eye of religion, even “if, in the desert, they had offered incense to it, clearly that would have been done without any idolatry.” The reason he assigns is, that God doubtless explained to Moses and the elders its typical character as an emblem of our Saviour; and even the rest of the people, who perhaps did not understand this its sacramental character, and who still looked to it and worshipped it, were nevertheless not guilty of idolatry; because they were directed by the faith of Moses, and other chosen servants of God, in their own belief; and reposing on them as exemplars, did as they saw them do. He adds, that the brazen serpent was with reason destroyed ultimately, because they worshipped it after all knowledge of its typical character was obliterated.

Can a stronger argument be conceived for the utter annihilation of image-worship? even taking the suggestion of Naclantus to be correct that the brazen serpent was worshipped and had incense burnt to it in the wilderness. He says the mass of people worshipped it without any better reason than that their rulers and guides worshipped it; and that afterwards, when the belief which justified those rulers and guides in their worship was forgotten, it was worshipped idolatrously. Human nature is the same; and, under the changed circumstances of ourselves and our dispensation, a similar progress must

follow any adoption and worship of images in the Christian Church. Suppose an image be set up, as Dr. Baines assures us, merely to remind us of what Christ has done for us; the Council of Trent requires that image to be reverenced with due honour; the head is to be uncovered, the body is to be prostrated, the knee is to be bent, before it. The following stages, which Cardinal Bellarmin, in his enumeration of the different and opposite views taken of the subject by members of his own, the Roman Church, clearly indicates, will inevitably follow. 1. Some will worship (or honestly say they worship) merely before the image. This, Naclantus informs us, is said by some persons "*for caution-sake.*" 2. Then some will worship the image, but solely with an adoration to be passed on, and beyond the image, to the spiritual object of their worship. 3. Then some will worship the image with an inferior adoration, reserving their full adoration for the prototype. And then, 4. Others, with the example of Naclantus, the "*day-star*" of the Tridentine Council, Cajetan, the canonized saints Thomas Aquinas, and Bonaventura, and others, will worship the image, and adore it with the selfsame adoration with which they worship and adore the being of which it is the figure and representative, and they "*will teach men so.*"

And thus, were the question now put to us, which, as we have seen, was put in 1826, by the Romanist Bishop of Siga, to the mixed congregation of Romanists and members of the Church of England and Dissenters, at the consecration of the Romanist chapel at Bradford, in Yorkshire, "*Is it possible that any of you should persuade yourselves that the most ignorant Catholic here present could be capable of adoring*

the ivory image, for instance, which you see on that altar?" our reply must be, "We know not the persons who are present; but this we know, that your saints and bishops and doctors have declared, that the faithful in your Church must worship the image of Christ, and also the cross; and, moreover, that they must adore them with the selfsame adoration with which they worship our Blessed Saviour Himself. We are not careful or competent to reconcile these contradictions in your doctrines and worship; we leave that to you. We speak only of what we have heard with our ears, and seen with our eyes; and we thank the God of Truth for His grace in rescuing us from such superstitions."

CHAPTER V.

LITURGY AND SERVICES OF ROME.

WHILE such is the ordinance of the Church of Rome in her decrees, and the doctrine of her canonized saints and teachers, no other view of the case is placed before us by her liturgies and formularies. The public services of that Church on the 3rd of May, called "The Invention of the Holy Cross," and also on the 14th of September, called "The Exaltation of the Holy Cross," or, "Holy Cross," or, anciently, "Holy Rood-day," supply us, of themselves, abundantly with proof how far the innovation of image-worship has mingled itself, in the Church of Rome, with the worship of Almighty God, and polluted the simplicity and purity of primitive Christian worship. Before we make a more especial reference to those services, one or two points, not generally known or remembered among us, must be adverted to.

In the first place, it must be borne in mind, that the crosses erected in churches are regarded, in point of religious veneration, exactly on the same footing with the images of our Blessed Saviour.* Romanist writers distinguish between the real actual cross on which our Saviour suffered, (or any the smallest particle of it, of which they maintain that there are very

* See St. Thomas Aquinas, *Distinc.*, lib. iii. dist. ix. solut. iv. (Ven. 1780,) vol. xi. p. 136; and Cardinal Bellarmin, *tom. ii. lib. ii. cap. xxvi.*, on the Adoration of the Cross.

many still in existence,) and the figure of that cross as erected in churches, and now consecrated for religious use.

The former, the actual material cross, or any the smallest particle of it, they enumerate among the most precious of reliques, and therefore to be venerated as other most precious reliques are, but not with *latria*: while other crosses they regard as images of Christ. Peter Lombard seems to have held that the worship of *latria*, the supreme divine service, was not to be paid to the Cross; on which Thomas Aquinas says we must make a distinction. The very cross on which Christ suffered may be regarded either as an image of the crucified One, in which case it must be adored with the same adoration with which we approach the Saviour, or as a thing belonging to Christ and bearing a relation to Him; and in this light it is to be worshipped with hyperdulia, (the worship considered in later times to be appropriated to the Virgin Mary.) "But," he continues, "other crosses are adored in no other light than that of His image; and, therefore, they are adored with supreme and divine worship." He had before, in stating the question of which he gives the above solution, drawn out formally this syllogism: "The cross is the image of Christ crucified: but the image of Christ crucified is to be adored with supreme divine worship; therefore, the Cross is to be so likewise."

It will be borne in mind that this is no ordinary authority; and, indeed, while he himself refers to the second Council of Nice, the distinctions adopted by Bellarmin, Naclantus, and other subsequent doctors in the Church of Rome, are found in him. This Seraphic Doctor, as he was called, (it must be remembered,)

was canonized by Pope John XXII., A.D. 1325 ; and, in the very year in which Naclantus dedicated his volumes to Pope Pius V., that Pontiff, A.D. 1567, " commanded the festival and office of St. Thomas Aquinas to be kept equal with those of the four doctors of the Western Church." His festival is celebrated annually on the 7th of March ; and every year the Church of Rome sets her seal to the soundness and purity of his doctrine. Two prayers offered on that day, one to God, the other to this Thomas himself, will be enough to shew on what authority the proper adoration of the cross is pronounced to be supreme divine worship—the same adoration which is paid to God:

" O God, who dost enlighten Thy Church by the wonderful erudition of the blessed Thomas the Confessor, and makest it fruitful by his holy operation ; grant to us, we beseech Thee, to embrace with our understanding what he taught, and to fulfil by our imitation what he did.—Through our Lord."

" O best doctor, light of the Holy Church, blessed Thomas, lover of the divine law, intercede for us with the Son of God."

Thomas Aquinas, in his "Solution," briefly adverts to the service in the Church of Rome to which we must now direct our attention, together with the anthems which we shall here quote.

On each of the two days above mentioned, acts of adoration of the cross, containing as direct a prayer to it for spiritual blessings and even for salvation as could be made to the Saviour Himself, who died upon a cross on Calvary, are prescribed and enjoined as an essential part of the public worship of the Church.

This confession to our Saviour follows the legend

which speaks of Chosroas, King of Persia, having carried off from Jerusalem the cross which Helena had erected on Calvary.

“ We ought to glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom is our salvation, life, and resurrection ; by whom we are saved and set free. We ADORE Thy cross, O Lord, and celebrate Thy glorious passion.”

Among these anthems and confessions we read the following acts of prayer and adoration addressed to the cross :—

“ O cross ! hail, our only hope ! To the pious do thou multiply grace ; and for the guilty, blot out their sins.”

Another prayer is couched in these words :—

“ O thou cross ! more brilliant than all stars ; celebrated in the world ; much to be loved by men ; more holy than all things ; thou who alone wast worthy to bear the price of the world—bearing sweet wood, sweet nails, sweet burden ; DO THOU SAVE the present congregation assembled for thy praise.”

Among other anthems of praise are the following :—

“ O thou venerable cross ! thou who didst bring salvation to the miserable ! with what heraldings shall I extol thee, since thou preparedst life in heaven for us ? ”

“ O victory and wonderful sign of the cross, CAUSE THOU us to obtain the triumph in the Court of Heaven.”

“ The King is exalted to the sky, while the noble trophy of the cross is ADORED by all the worshippers of Christ for ever.”

These anthems are appended to the proper Psalms, instead of the *Gloria Patri* !

To this we must add the rubric in the Roman Pontifical, to which we have already referred, and which states the reason why, in the procession in honour of an emperor entering a city, the legate's cross should be on the right hand, and the emperor's sword on the left, to be no other than this—"That SUPREME DIVINE WORSHIP [*latrīa*] is due to the cross."*

With these authorised acts of public worship we must join the religious worship called "The adoration of the cross," enjoined by the Roman Missal to be celebrated on Good Friday. Can any the grossest superstition which we now witness, or have heard of among the least enlightened of the votaries of Rome, excite our wonder, when, on the very anniversary of the Redeemer's sacrifice, such acts are exhibited and such services prescribed in their holiest acts of public worship as are these?

"The priest receives from the deacon the cross already prepared on the altar, which, turning himself to the people, he uncovers a little way down from the top, and begins the anthem alone, 'Behold the wood of the cross!' and then he is assisted in the chant by the ministers down to 'Come ye, let us adore.' And when the choir is singing 'Come ye, let us adore,' all except the celebrant prostrate themselves. Afterwards he comes forward, and opens the right arm of the cross; and, lifting it a little higher than at first, he begins, 'Behold the wood of the cross!' others singing and adoring as above. Then the priest proceeds to the middle of the altar, and uncovering the cross entirely, and elevating it the third time higher, begins, 'Behold the wood of the cross!' others

* Rome, 1595, pp. 671, 672.

singing and adoring as above. Afterwards the priest alone carries the cross to a place prepared before the altar, and, kneeling, places it there. Presently, having put off his shoes, he approaches to **ADORE THE CROSS**, kneeling thrice before he kisses it. Then the ministers of the altar, and next the clergy and laity, two and two, kneeling thrice, adore the cross. Meantime, while the adoration of the cross is going on," &c., the choir are to sing more or fewer anthems, according to the time required for the congregation, whether large or small. "At the end of the adoration of the cross, the candles are lighted on the altar."*

The reader will bear in mind that the above passage does not give an account merely of what we may see done, and what may have been done by over-zealous and superstitious members of the Church of Rome, but is the very rubric in the Missal of that Church itself on Good Friday at the present day, prescribing and enjoining what her priests and people must do annually. They adore the cross of wood, and they call the service **THE ADORATION OF THE CROSS**; and their most celebrated canonized saints, whom they invoke in the prayer of public worship for their intercessions, declare that the cross itself is to be adored and worshipped with the same adoration and worship as must be rendered by faithful Christians to their Saviour and their God. What room is left for superstition to add anything in this department? Should the mass of the people now worship the cross and images, as the pagans in times of old, in the darkest and blackest regions of heathenism, worshipped their stocks and idols, (looking, as knowledge and experience bid us to look, to fallen human nature,) could it be regarded as

* *Missale Romanum, (Antwerp, 1641,) p. 201.*

any other than a natural consequence of the prescribed worship of the Church herself? Put the flimsy, abstruse, subtle distinctions of worship *direct* and *relative*, *primary* and *secondary*, *terminating* and *transitory*, in the one scale, and these palpable, visible, tangible demonstrations of mental and bodily worship and adoration on the other, and the latter will inevitably preponderate. And then comes the awful question, At whose door will the sin of such idolatry lie? To whom, by the eternal Judge, will the peril of this deplorable mischief be ascribed? Naclantus says, that to worship the image of Christ with the supreme divine adoration with which we adore God Himself, so far from being sin, is the custom and duty of the faithful; while the principle he lays down in the case of the brazen serpent would rescue the common people from the guilt of idolatry, (even were it idolatry in the priests and those who know that they must worship not the image but the prototype,) because the people only do their duty in following the outward acts of their spiritual authorised teachers. But can this be regarded with complacency and satisfaction, and be acquiesced in as an argument which should allay all disquietude in those Christians to whom the souls of others are dear, for whom, as well as for their own, Christ died? Will not the spirit of St. Paul's language rouse again the misgivings which such fallacious views may have lulled, "Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died?"

Now it may be asked, whether the most superstitious observances, and acts of prayer and adoration, addressed to images and crosses by the most ignorant on the face of the earth, cannot be justified by such

solemn acts of prayer and praise as these. What avail all those nice distinctions, and refined disquisitions, which (as Cardinal Bellarmin himself confesses with regard to some) are not understood even by those who make them, much less by the ordinary worshipper? Here are prayers and praises addressed unequivocally and directly to the cross: the people can never be influenced by abstruse speculations so powerfully as by what they hear and see. They hear and see their Church in her Liturgy, and by the persons of her priests, worshipping, and adoring, and praying to images and the cross, and praising them on their knees with eyes raised to the visible objects of their addresses, and hands uplifted to them. *Decipit exemplar vitiis imitabile.* They understand what they see and hear: even if they heard the subtleties with which some works abound, they would not understand them. And if they heard the contradictory doctrines of their saints and authorised teachers, and understood them, they could not weigh the arguments; and the practice being all on one side—the side of adoration—they would adore the cross and images, and leave the defence of the adoration to others. Indeed this seems to be the course which Naclantus and others would suggest, when they maintain, that, though the common people adored the brazen serpent in the wilderness without any insight at all into its typical character, they were not guilty of idolatry, because they merely followed their rulers in things spiritual in what they did. Thus, if the people in the less enlightened Roman Catholic countries should worship the cross and images with the adoration due only to God, not only would they do as learned doctors and canonized saints teach them

that it is their duty to do, but they would be guiltless, because they would be only implicitly following the outward acts of worship, which their priests offered, although with a different view from their own.

But can this be justified on any principle of humanity, or Christian faith and truth? The words of Holy Scripture appear to rise up in judgment, and to condemn altogether such perilous dealings and misguidings: “Take heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak; for, if any man see thee who hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol’s temple, shall not the conscience of him that is weak be emboldened to eat those things that are offered to idols? and through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died.”*

* 1 Cor. viii. 9; see also Rom. xiv.

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

EVIDENCE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

SECTION I.

HAVING, under the previous heads of our inquiry on this subject, ascertained what is the theory and the practice of image-worship in the Church of Rome, it remains for us now to test its spirit by the written word of God, and by the best and safest comment on that word, the faith and practice of the Primitive Church. We must not be withdrawn from the pursuit of this inquiry by any modern assertion, that, “Whether pictures and images were used in the Church of old, is not a point of much importance, for their use has always been a matter of discipline.”* In this sentiment two considerations forbid us to acquiesce: First, even were the admission of images, accompanied by the due worship required to be paid to them, a mere matter of discipline, yet, if it have no sanction in God’s most Holy word, but be proved to be contrary to the true spirit and real bearing of that word throughout, it must then be rejected by all who are not ready to make the word of God of none effect by human tradition, and by teaching for our guidance the commandments of men.

In the second place, we scarcely understand how that

* Dr. Wiseman’s Lectures, (London, 1836,) vol. ii. p. 130.

can be regarded as a matter merely of discipline, which is not only so positively and solemnly enacted by the Council of Trent, and so “most firmly asserted” in the creed of Pope Pius IV, but is declared by the second Council of Nice (to the sanction of which council the Council of Trent appeals in this very article of image-worship) to be binding on all Christians, on pain of incurring “most dreadful anathemas,” the curses and maledictions apportioned to the worst of heresies,—a sentence in which the representatives of the Roman Church present at that council concurred, and on the strength of which image-worship was forced on all the Churches of the West. When we find, moreover, in the same council, that the admission and adoration of images is made (not by individual bishops and patriarchs only, but by the whole council together *) an article of the selfsame creed and profession of faith in which they declare their belief in God, in the Holy Trinity, in our blessed Saviour, and in the resurrection to eternal life; subjecting all “who dare to think or teach otherwise” to excommunication and cursing; and, lastly, when we find the council held at Oxford in the time of Archbishop Arundel,—a few years only after heresy had been made by the English Parliament punishable by death by burning,—decreeing any person to be guilty of heresy who asserted or insinuated anything contrary to the worship of images, we cannot see how the distinction which would rank the use of images among matters of discipline, can be allowed to affect the course of our inquiry.

We proceed, therefore, to inquire, in the first place, whether the use and the invocation of images in the Church of Christ are sanctioned by the inspired

* Syn. Nic. II. Act vii., at the close, (Paris, 1671,) p. 551.

word of Revelation; or, on the contrary, whether it be not palpably contrary both to the letter, spirit, the true intent and meaning, and the bearing and ruling of that word.* Now, when we examine the Holy Scripture from its first to its last page, not with the view of accommodating its laws and ordinances and doctrines and examples to our opinions, but with the honest desire of conforming our belief and practice, our judgment and our will, to the principles there promulgated and established, and the intimations of the Almighty's mind and will there revealed, what is the result? We find throughout, over and over again, in every variety of language, the formation of any material figure whatever as an object of worship prohibited, and denounced as an abomination in the sight of the Divine Lawgiver. And we never discover any exception in favour of any form, or figure, or representation whatever; all are equally condemned on pain of incurring the displeasure of Almighty God. The refined and subtle distinctions of those objects into idols, likenesses, and images, and imitations, (attempted now to be drawn by the defenders of image-worship in the Church of Rome,) have in the Bible no place nor name. In our present inquiry we will not knowingly omit a single sentence of Holy Scripture usually cited as countenancing that worship. We would first, however, recal some of those passages which appear to rule the case entirely, and, like a master-principle, to pro-

* We would here earnestly invite the reader to reflect carefully on the principles on which alone we are persuaded that a believer, bent on arriving at the truth, can study the Holy Scriptures, either as the record of covenants between God and His fallen and redeemed creatures, or as the will and testament of Him who died for our salvation. The reader will find those principles stated and illustrated in "Primitive Christian Worship," part i. chap. ii. section ii.

vide a safe and ready key to the interpretation of any expression, the meaning of which may at first sight seem doubtful or ambiguous.

In the first place, we would say that such a master-principle is established against any images being made by the servants of the one true God, for the purpose of any religious worship whatever, by the very terms of the first and second prohibitions of the decalogue : “Thou shalt not have any other Gods beside me,” or “in my presence.” “Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them.” Again, thus solemnly is the command enforced by God’s extreme malediction :—“Cursed is the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place.”* Again, in the 26th chapter of Leviticus, the enumeration of the different material and visible objects of human worship is remarkably full and striking, intended purposely to comprehend every kind and species of image or representation, molten, sculptured, or painted :—“Ye shall make you no idols, nor graven image, nor rear you up a standing image [or statue]; neither shall ye set up any image of stone [or figured or painted stone] in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the Lord your God.” Again, how powerfully, and at the same time with what intelligible minuteness, is the same prohibition repeated in a subsequent part of the law,† intentionally a repetition of the original command :—“And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire; ye heard the

* Deut. xxvii. 14.

† Deut. iv. 12.

voice of the words, but ye saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. . . . Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves, for ye saw no manner of similitude in the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire, lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is in the earth, the likeness of any fowl that is in the air, the likeness of anything that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth."

The contrast is indeed very striking between the large, full, and comprehensive spirit of these commands and prohibitions, and the express sanction given by the Catechism of the Council of Trent, not only to make and retain and worship images of saints and angels, of the Virgin, and of our blessed Saviour, as God manifest in the flesh, but also to make visible and material representations of any one of the persons of the blessed Trinity.*

Having thus solemnly warned them never, under any figure, image, or likeness, to worship the true God, whose voice they heard, the lawgiver cautions them against the temptation to worship any of the visible works of creation.

And lest they should suppose, that, provided they did not substitute false gods, and idols, and images, in place of the one true God, but merely added the worship of them over and above to His worship, associating the two together, they would not break His law nor incur His displeasure, He both beforehand warns them against such delusions, and in subsequent times vindicated the single and exclusive oneness of His wor-

* Ad Parochos, part iii.

ship, on those who dared to join it with any other. Thus, immediately after the delivery of the decalogue : “Ye shall not make WITH me gods of silver,” &c.*

In the second book of Kings a striking instance is recorded of this unholy union of the worship of the only Lord with the worship of pagan deities :—They feared the **LORD**, and served their own gods, their graven images.† In the prophet Zephaniah we read of the fate of these worshippers :—“I will cut off them that worship the host of heaven upon the house-tops, and them that worship and that swear by the **LORD**, and that swear by **Malcham**.”‡ A similar denunciation was made subsequently by Ezekiel :—“As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the **LORD** God : ‘Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me ; but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts and with your idols.’”§

Now, without insisting upon what seenis most clear, that the prohibition of every kind and species of image as an object of worship had reference to the worship of the Lord God Himself, forbidding His people to worship Him through any similitude, (“in that day ye saw no similitude, only ye heard a voice,”) even should we allow that all these commands and prohibitions referred to the idols of Egypt and Canaan, still, if no exception is made, if no permission is anywhere given to worship God, or to honour his saints, through an image made after their likeness, we would ask, are not these solemn repeated injunctions and prohibitions quite sufficient to guide a single-hearted man, bent on conforming himself and his conduct agreeably to whatever the revealed word may declare to be God’s

* Exod. xx. 23.

† 2 Kings, xvii. 33, 41.

‡ Zeph. i. 5.

§ Ezek. xx. 39.

will? With the curses, and imprecations, and anathemas of the second Council of Nice before our eyes, in the fulness of our conviction that both our faith and our practice are primitive and apostolical, we would ask, Does the Roman Church, by insisting upon the admission and veneration of images, or our own Church, by excluding images from the worship of God altogether, act more agreeably to the plain unsophisticated words of His eternal truth? The members of that council, including the two representatives of the See of Rome, pronounce an anathema on any one who should dare to apply to image-worship in the Christian Church the prohibitions against idols recorded in the Old Testament. We cannot but regard these prohibitions not only as applicable to the case of the Church under the Gospel, but even still more authoritatively binding, inasmuch as, from the covenant of the Law, (that divine elementary instructor to bring us to Christ,) we have passed into the covenant of faith and spiritual worship.

SECTION II.

But we must now examine those passages of Holy Scripture which have been commonly cited as admitting and countenancing the worship of images, if they do not suggest and enjoin them.

It is painful to enter on this part of our inquiry, (necessary as it is,) because the greater part of the interpretations of such passages are so utterly indefensible, and without any foundation in sound biblical criticism, that, were they not found in the very books of the defenders of image-worship, it would scarcely be believed that they were in good faith and seriously put forward; and we might be suspected of having suggested arguments for the purpose of answering them.

The first we would mention is a passage already quoted as having received in the second Nicene Council, from Anastasius, Bishop of Theopolis, a comment favourable to the views of the advocates of image-worship:—"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." The criticism on this passage which the council itself adopted is this:—"In the first member, he says merely, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God,' and does not add the word 'ONLY'; in the second member he adds the word 'ONLY,' 'and Him only shalt thou serve;' so that, while we must not SERVE any other than God, the same prohibition does not apply to the other word, 'WORSHIP.'" The argument in which the whole second Nicene Council not only acquiesced, but seemed to triumph, is this:—"In this passage our Lord does not forbid us to worship any other objects than God, provided we do not serve them; therefore we may worship images, provided we do not serve them."

How many reflections are forced upon us here! But, first, as to the argument, utterly groundless as it is: Satan did not, in the words recorded, tempt our blessed Lord to SERVE Him, but only to WORSHIP Him. If, then, the rebuke of our Lord only implied the unlawfulness, according to the Divine will, of serving any other being, and not of worshipping that being, the rebuke would have been no answer to Satan's temptation. He asked not for service at Christ's hand, but only worship. If our Lord's words meant that He was at liberty to worship, but not to serve him, as far as the mere words go, Satan might, notwithstanding the prohibition alleged, have obtained all he required. But this is too holy ground for such irreverent trifling. Our blessed Saviour willed, once and

* St. Matthew, iv. 10.

for ever, with indignation, to silence the tempter by the universal and overwhelming first principle of the divine law, that the Lord God is the only lawful object of man's worship and service. The learned reader scarcely needs to be reminded that the same word (the same in the Greek of the Septuagint and in this passage of St. Matthew) is again and again employed, when God's people were forbidden to worship any other god. "Thou shalt not worship any other gods."* "Thou shalt not worship a strange god."† And, not to cite any more passages to prove the futility of the supposed distinction, one paragraph in the second book of Kings, intended, apparently, to embrace every kind of worship, adoration, and service, comes home to the point with remarkable force:—"Ye shall not fear other gods, nor worship them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them; but the Lord, Him shall ye fear, and Him shall ye worship, and to Him shall ye do sacrifice." In the latter clause, commanding the worship of God, the very word "serve" is even omitted as superfluous, being comprehended in the word "worship," and the word "worship" is inserted in the prohibitory clause.‡

Another proof from Holy Scripture, cited both by the same second Council of Nice, and by the apologists of image-worship from that time to the present,

* Exodus, xxxiv. 14.

† Psalm lxxxii. 9.

‡ 2 Kings, xvii. 35. The conclusive character of this passage is very much weakened to the English reader, because our translators have varied not the meaning but the expression in their rendering of the same word in the two parts of the sentence, in the one calling it "bow yourselves down," in the other "worship;" whereas the Hebrew, the Septuagint, and the Vulgate have the selfsame word in each case, the Vulgate employing the same word in rendering the Hebrew here as in rendering the Greek in St. Matthew—*adorare*.

is the fact of Moses having, by the immediate command of God, caused two cherubim to be made, which should overshadow the mercy-seat,* or cover of the ark of the covenant. The words of Bellarmin† are these:—"Of necessity, the images of the cherubim, being upon the ark, were adored by those who adored the ark." But where is it ever said that God directed the people to adore the ark, or that the people ever did adore either it or the cherubim, from the day they were made to the time when they were destroyed? But Bellarmin, and the doctors of the Roman Catholic Church in general, refer us to a passage in which David calls that mercy-seat the footstool of the Lord, and another, in which the same holy Psalmist calls upon the faithful to worship God's footstool: and hence they argue that the ark was to be worshipped, and that the images of saints and of the cross may be worshipped also.‡ It is scarcely necessary to observe, that the object of worship mentioned by the Psalmist here is not the footstool, but God, at whose footstool he calls upon his fellow-believers to worship; as he does elsewhere, employing the same word, declare his own desire, and invite his brethren to "worship toward," or "at His holy temple" §—"toward," or "at His holy hill."¶

In the second Council of Nice, on reference being made to this argument, and the passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews being quoted, in which its inspired author enumerates the mercy-seat and the cherubim among the sacred things of the first temple, the President Tarasius, Patriarch of Constantinople, exclaimed, "If the Old [Testament] had cherubim overshadowing

* "ιλαστήριον"—propitiatorium. † Bell. lib. ii. chap. xii.

‡ 1 Chron. xxviii. 2. Psalms, xcix. 5; cxxxii. 7.

§ Psalms, v. 7; cxxxviii. 7. ¶ Psalm xcix. 9.

the mercy-seat, we, too, will have images of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Mother of God, and of his saints, overshadowing the mercy-seat." To which "the most illustrious rulers" answered, "Truly it is the ordinance of God."

Another argument, urged in the same way from the first throughout down to our times, is, "that Moses caused the brazen serpent to be formed, that all who looked to it might be relieved from their plague; therefore, since unquestionably that was a type of Christ crucified, the image of Christ on the cross is to be received in Christian churches and worshipped."

We have heard Naclantus say,* that, had the Israelites worshipped the brazen serpent and offered incense to it in the wilderness, it would not have been idolatry. The matter of fact is, that we never read of any reverence whatever being paid to it in the wilderness; and the same passage which informs us (in a most warning lesson against the use of images) that the Israelites, in their degenerate and idolatrous state, offered incense to it, records also its utter destruction, on that very account, by the pious King Hezekiah, who has this testimony, that "he trusted in the Lord God of Israel, and clave to the Lord, and departed not from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses." When he brake it in pieces, he called it *nehushtan*, or "the lump of brass."

We might now ask, whether it does not appear, beyond gainsaying or further question, to have been the purpose of the Almighty to fence His own worship against the mixture of images of any kind,—carved, molten, engraved, painted, stone, wood, metal, or any other material; whether the Old Testament does

* See above, p. 78.

not abound with prohibitions, in every variety of language, to the same effect; and whether, from its first to its last page, there is any one appearance of relaxation from the uncompromising stringency of those prohibitory laws.

SECTION III.

It has been said, that, living under the Gospel, we are released from the obligations of the elder covenant. But, in a religion called by an especial and distinguishing name, The Law of Faith, as opposed to the law of outward observances, would it not be a retrograde movement to admit images into our spiritual worship, when they were excluded from the Jewish? Accordingly we find pervading the whole of the New Testament the same spirit which guided the prophets of old to forbid the making of any figure or similitude for the purposes of worship. Every opportunity is taken by the Apostles to withdraw the Gentiles from the worship of idols; and (as we shall be often reminded when we examine the testimony of the primitive fathers) the prohibitions are so general, that, had the intention of the Apostles been to allow of any relaxation of the rule, they must have mentioned it.

When Paul and Barnabas preached the Gospel at Lystra, they did not bid the worshippers of Jupiter take down the image of their fabled god, and substitute the image of their master Christ in its stead. Their indignant rejection of the divine honours offered them admitted of no exception in favour of any being as the object of worship, beside the one living God, nor allowed the image of that God to be set up as His representative:—"Sirs, why do ye these things?" were their words. "We also are men of

like passions with you, and we preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities to serve the living God, who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.”* And the beloved Apostle makes no exception of any image of his fellow-Apostles, or of our blessed Saviour, when, as the closing words of his epistle, he gives believers this solemn charge: “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”

A text, however, to which appeals have been made in favour of image-worship, but which Bellarmin and Coccius and others, though anxiously pressing every colourable evidence into the service, seem, from their omission of it, to have considered untenable, requires to be examined in this place. The passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, c. xi. v. 21, which our authorized version renders, “Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, *leaning* upon the top of his staff,” (putting the word *leaning* in italics, to notify that it is an expletive not found in the original Greek,) the Roman Catholic Douay Bible, following the Vulgate, materially changes, rendering the last words, “ADORED THE TOP OF HIS ROD;” and appends the following sentences by way of comment:—

“Observe, that adoration, as the Scripture useth the word, may be done to creatures, or to God at or before a creature, as at or before the Ark of the Testament in old-time, now at or before the crucifix, relics, images. By all which it is evident that it is false, that we may not adore, image, crucifix, or any visible creature, nor kneel before them.”

The circumstances of this passage are remarkable. The inspired author of the Epistle to the Hebrews

* Acts, xiv. 15.

quotes the passage in Genesis, (xlvii. 31,) which records the fact adverted to, in the words of the Septuagint; the Hebrew word which that version renders *rod* or *staff*, meaning also, when read with other points, a *bed*; our version of that passage in Genesis being, “And Israel bowed himself upon the bed’s head.” The Vulgate renders it, “Israel adored God, being turned to the bed’s head.”

In their interpretation of this passage, Jewish writers differ materially among themselves, some considering it to imply that Jacob bowed to Joseph in acknowledgment of his authority, but the greater part, that he bowed to God in acknowledgment of His mercy.*

The Greek in the passage before us, identical with the reading in the Septuagint, cannot admit of the rendering of the Vulgate, but must be translated either “worshipped *upon*,” or “worshipped *towards* the top of *his staff*;” a question then arising, whether it was Joseph’s staff or Jacob’s on which he worshipped, or towards which he bent.†

The Roman Catholic commentators above quoted, maintaining that Jacob adored the staff of Joseph itself, and thence concluding, that to adore crucifixes, images, and reliques is lawful, appeal to the testimony of St. Chrysostom in confirmation of their view. But that ancient Father is very far from supporting their interpretation.‡ He speaks of Jacob worshipping upon, or towards the top of his staff, to do honour to

* The reader may consult “The Sacred Scriptures, in Hebrew and English,” (London, 1844,) p. 318.

† The Vulgate points to Joseph’s staff, *ejus*, the Greek of Griesbach to Jacob’s, (*αὐτοῦ*, his own staff;) several of our own editions, both before and after Griesbach, reading *αὐτοῦ*, which would seem to refer to Joseph.

‡ In Gen.; Homil. 66, edit. Bened., vol. iv. p. 631.

Joseph, recognizing his superior power and dignity; but he suggests not the shadow of an allusion to Jacob adoring the staff. All that can be reasonably inferred from this view of the passage is, that, by bending towards his son's staff, (as it was usual to do towards a royal sceptre,) Jacob acknowledged him in one sense his superior, and so fulfilled the prophecy of that son's dream, that his father should bow down before him, —the precise sense in which St. Chrysostom understands it.

The celebrated Roman Catholic annotator, Cornelius a Lapide, maintaining that it was to Joseph's staff, as to a sceptre, that Jacob bent down, adverts to the use and application of the passage made by Pope Adrian in his letter to Constantine and Irene, in which he urged them to convene a council for the establishment of image-worship. Whether, as some suppose, Adrian's letter was originally written in Latin, being afterwards translated for the use of the Greeks; or whether he sent it in Greek, and, like other Greek documents, it was afterwards translated into Latin, the passage in Adrian's letter is very remarkable. In the Greek, the reading of the Septuagint is retained, the Latin version using these words, "Summitatem virgæ filii sui Joseph deosculatus est:" "He kissed the top of his son Joseph's rod." Adrian adds, that Jacob did it in the love of faith, and then cites the Apostle's testimony thus:—"The blessed Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, says, that Jacob did not worship the rod, but him who was its possessor, indicating his love; so we, too, from the desire and love which we bear to the Lord and His saints, describe their features in images, not fixing the honour on the tablet and colours, but on those whose names the images bear."

On the whole, it is difficult to perceive how this passage of the New Testament can be so strained as to support the doctrine and practice, in defence of which it is cited by some Romanists. Even were we, for argument's sake, to allow that it was to Joseph, then present before him, and not to the Almighty, that the Patriarch intended to do homage, offering an outward mark of that homage by bending before Joseph's rod as a sceptre, or, to use Pope Adrian's words, by kissing it, we cannot see how, under that view, this passage can be forced so as to sanction the image-worship of the Church of Rome.

Most persons, however, who approach the question with an unprejudiced mind, will probably acquiesce in the interpretation of our authorized version, as at once the more natural rendering, more easily reconcilable with the present reading of the Hebrew, and closer to the Greek of the New Testament. This interpretation recommends itself also strongly for our adoption, by the direct and full sanction given to it by St. Augustin himself, with whose words we shall close these remarks. This great Father of the Latin Church contemplates both of the two supposed cases; first, that the staff was Jacob's; secondly, that it was Joseph's. If the staff were Joseph's, Augustin leads us to regard it as a very natural thing for a dutiful son to place his own staff in his father's hand for the purpose of supporting his enfeebled and sinking frame. If, on the other hand, the staff were Jacob's own (which St. Augustin seems to regard as the more probable supposition), what could be more natural than for an old man, seated on the side of his couch, and leaning forward, while his son bound himself by an oath to him, (the prescribed form of which was, that the person binding

himself by the oath should place his hand under the thigh of the person to whom he swore,) to rest himself on his staff? The words of St. Augustin are these:—

“ It may be easily understood that an old man, bearing a staff in the way in which that age usually did as he bent himself to adore God, did so on the top of his own staff, which he thus bore, so that by bending his head upon it, he would adore God.”*

That no opening is made in the New Testament for such admission of images, and no relaxation of the universal law of the Mosaic dispensation, we not only see for ourselves in our study of the New Testament, but might even have concluded, the advocates of image-worship themselves, with Thomas Aquinas at their head, being judges, from the gratuitous assumption made by them, when they assert that many rules for the guidance of the Church in after ages were enacted by the Apostles, which are not found in the Sacred Scripture,† and, among other points, on the use of images. The supporters of image-worship cannot adduce a single word correctly translated and interpreted, “according to the common consent of the Fathers,” ‡ to countenance their doctrine and practice from

* *Facile intelligeretur senem, qui virgam ferebat eo more quo illa ætas baculum ferre solebat, ut se inclinavit ad Deum adorandum, id utique fecisse super cacumen virgæ sue quam sic ferebat, ut super eam caput inclinando adoraret Deum.*—*Quæst. in Gen.*, ed. Bened., vol. iii. p. 418.

† Thomas Aquinas, *distinc. ix. quæst. vii. sol. iv.*

‡ Coccius, indeed, in his celebrated work on the Church, resolved not to leave the New Testament without extracting from it some contribution to countenance the use and worship of images, quotes the passage, Matthew, xii. 16, “ Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him ‘ Cæsar’s.’ ”

the New Testament ; and instead of such sanction, they boldly substitute the assertion, that the Apostles made rules for image-worship which the inspired writers did not record, but left them to the custody of tradition. This is a most groundless assumption. Such a fact seemed necessary to support the theory of image-worship, and therefore its supposed existence was maintained not only without proof, but contrary to the clearest evidence ; for, had such rules existed, they must have been found somewhere in the remains of the ancient Fathers ; and, had they been even thought of in the first ages, they would unquestionably have been inserted in what are called The Apostolical Canons and Constitutions. The total silence on the subject there not only refutes the fable of such rules having ever been in existence, but, as we shall see under our next head, proves that images were not in use in the churches of Christ when those Canons and Constitutions were framed.

And now having before our eyes the anathemas, and reproaches, uttered by the second Council of Nice against all, as maintainers of heresy, who should apply to the images set up and worshipped in the Christian Church the threats and prohibitions and warnings in the Holy Scriptures against idols, we are bold enough (in the strength of the cause of truth) again to ask, even at the risk of unnecessary repetition, whether of the two bodies more closely and faithfully fulfils the will of God, as made known to us in His holy word,— we of the Church of England, who admit no image to be placed in God's house as an object of veneration, (whatever be the kind of veneration,) or the Church of Rome, which requires images to be had and retained in the churches, and to be venerated ? If God says, “ Thou

shalt make no image to worship it ;” we ask, which shews himself the more ready to receive that command with free, full, and perfect obedience,—the person, on the one hand, who not only admits, but requires images to be used in the worship of God, (by whatever nice distinctions and subtle arguments he may try to separate between the worship paid to them and to idols, and by whatever abstract rules he may endeavour to preserve the veneration of images from degenerating into palpable idolatry,) or, on the other hand, the person who resolves to preserve the worship of Almighty God from the possibility of such contamination, and consequently at once and for ever excludes all images, as objects of religious veneration, from the sanctuary of the Lord ? We cannot for a moment doubt what would be the righteous verdict of upright and enlightened men on this issue joined between the two Churches.

CHAPTER II.

EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

SECTION I.

HAVING seen that image-worship, so far from resting on any foundation of Holy Scripture, runs counter to the spirit of God's commands throughout, we might well let the matter rest there; for when we have once ascertained the mind and will of our heavenly Law-giver, all human authority will not weigh as a grain of dust in the balance of the sanctuary. But it has ever been, and always must be, a satisfaction of very high value, to be confirmed in the view which we take of the doctrines and laws of the Bible, by finding it coincide with the teaching and practice of the Primitive Church; to be assured that the principles on which we frame and regulate our own worship of Almighty God are identifiable with those which, in the ages next to the Apostolic, guided the saints and martyrs and confessors, and the faithful at large as a body, in their devotions; that, when we worship the God of our fathers, though it be after the way which the Church of Rome calls heresy, yet, in very deed and truth, we are treading the path along which the footsteps not only of the Apostles but of their successors also are visible throughout. It is indeed our satisfaction, and a constant well-spring of thankfulness to the Divine Founder of our faith and hope, to trace those marks of pure and primitive worship in any department of the doctrines and practice

of our Church. But in no one point does the voice of antiquity speak with a more certain sound, than on the subject of our present inquiry ; in no one point does it bear more unequivocal witness to the fact, that we of the Church of England have retained the precious trust of the old religion, and that the Church of Rome has embraced an innovation—not a development, as their innovations have of late been called, but a dangerous and unhallowed novelty—never heard of in the Primitive Church except to be condemned, and never suffered to obtain a footing among Christians till the corruptions of Paganism (finding too ready and willing a response in fallen human nature) succeeded in mingling themselves stealthily with the pure and simple institutions of the Gospel, and in bringing down again its spiritual worship to a level with the associations of heathenism.

The transition of heathen converts from a religion in which they had worshipped the fabled gods of their country represented by their idols, to a religion in which, though the objects were changed, the mode of worship was the same, (the images of Christ and the Virgin Mother and the saints being substituted for the material forms of their “ gods many and lords many,”) was much more easy transition, far less disturbing to their prejudices and habits, than an entire change from the outward adoration of various visible and material objects, to the spiritual worship of one only and invisible God. On the ever fatal principle of doing evil that good may come, instead of persevering in the right course with uncompromising firmness and patience, waiting for God’s good time to bring about His merciful designs in His own way, Christian teachers at length began to yield, and gradually to accommodate the worship of the Church to the wishes of those who were on

those terms more ready to adopt it. But these innovations were no sooner attempted in any of the churches, than solemn protests arose against them on every side; and voices loud and clear were heard in the East and re-echoed from the West, recalling those who had already been misled back to the ancient and primitive worship, and warning the rest of the faithful to resist the temptation, and to remain unshaken in their adherence to the service of Almighty God, as it had been delivered down from the first.

At length, after image-worship had been again and again forbidden and condemned by saints and bishops and councils, it was (as we have already seen) established by the second Council of Nice, which was opened by the Patriarch of Constantinople in person, and attended by the Roman Pontiff through his two representatives. But even the very Emperor (Constantine V.) in whose name, conjointly with his mother Irene's, (who held the reins of government during his minority,) the council was held, no sooner came to man's estate, than he professed his adherence to the ancient worship, and set at nought the decrees of that council.* We have already adverted to the repeated struggles by which Christian nobles and bishops and kings, in Germany, France, and England, strove to protect their own churches against the enforcement of the papal decrees on this subject. But they were unavailing. The fatal innovation prevailed through the dark ages, gaining strength more and more, till the era of the Reformation.

These observations, however, are only prefatory to our examination of the evidence of the earliest records

* See Naclantus, vol. i. p. 203.

of the Church, through the first five centuries and more, on the subject of image-worship.

That evidence seems to offer itself to our consideration under three points of view:—

First, The total absence of any intimation that images were admitted into churches as objects of religious veneration.

Secondly, The full, free, unguarded, and unreserved condemnation of the worship paid by the heathen to images, couched in such universally comprehensive language, together with such reasonings, and illustrations, as must have required exceptions to be made, and distinctions and illustrations to be appended, had the writers been aware that images of our Saviour, of the Virgin, of angels, and saints, existed in the churches, or were worshipped by their fellow-Christians.

Thirdly, The positive condemnation of images, as soon as they began to appear, by contemporary teachers and writers, and by councils, as well in the East as in the West.

It now remains for us to state the testimony, whether negative or positive, borne by those writers to whom an appeal must be made when we would ascertain the views, either in doctrine or discipline, of the Primitive Church. For a brief account of each of the witnesses in succession, their character, station, and age, their writings and circumstances, the reader is referred to the volumes entitled "Primitive Christian Worship," and "The Romish Worship of the Virgin;" and to the Tracts called "What is Romanism?"* As far, however, as relates to the first and purest ages of the

* Nos. 6 and 7, and 12, 13, 14, 15, 16; also in the separate volumes, "Primitive Christian Worship," chapter iv.; "Romish Worship of the Virgin," part iii. and iv.

Church, the only question will be, whether Christians admitted images of CHRIST, and representations of the BLESSED TRINITY, into their churches, for the purposes of religious veneration and worship; since, saints and angels themselves not being then addressed with any kind of worship or invocation, it would be preposterous to suppose that their images would be set up and worshipped.

SECTION II.

EVIDENCE OF THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS.

In the works of the Apostolic Fathers, Barnabas, Clement, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp, we are refreshed with many glowing and elevating passages of instruction, exhortation, and encouragement on the subject of prayer, and of our drawing nigh unto God in full assurance of faith through the mediation of our crucified Redeemer. But there is no allusion to any visible and material representation of that Saviour on earth, before which, as His likeness, we should kneel and offer our supplications and praises, as honouring the image for the sake of the heavenly Original. The following passage from Clement, Bishop of Rome, in his first epistle to the Church at Corinth, will convey a fair notion of the spirit and tone, with regard to Christian worship, which pervades the literary remains of the five apostolic Fathers:—

“This is the way, beloved, in which we find Jesus Christ our salvation, the Chief Priest of our offerings, our protector, and the succourer of our weakness. By Him let us look stedfastly to the heights of heaven; by Him let us behold the most high and spotless face; by Him the eyes of our heart are opened; by Him our

* Clement, 1st Epist. to Corinth. chap. xxxvi.

ignorant and darkened minds shoot forth into his marvellous light; by Him the Supreme Governor willed that we should taste immortality; who being the brightness of His magnificence, is so much greater than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."

Such pure and apostolical and scriptural views contrast strongly and brightly, but yet painfully, with the sentiments of Clement's later successors in the See of Rome; especially with the profession and declaration of Adrian, in his letter to Constantine and Irene, at the close of the eighth century, just before the second Nicene Council. That letter abounds with doctrines which Clement could not have recognised as belonging to the faith once delivered to the saints; and on the subject before us, among other sentences, we read these, which Adrian adopts as his own, and which he quotes as the words of St. Basil:—words which no more came from the pen of that holy man, than from Clement himself:—

“I confess the holy Mary, who gave Him birth according to the flesh, to be Mother of God; I receive also the holy Apostles, prophets, and martyrs, who offer supplications to God, that, through their mediation, God, who loves man, might be merciful to me, and grant remission of sins. Wherefore also I honour and openly worship the forms, or representations,* or spectacles of their images; for this has been delivered down from the holy Apostles, and must not be forbidden; but in all our churches we raise representations of them.”

* The Greek is *τὰς ιστορίας τῶν εἰκόνων αὐτῶν τιμῶ καὶ προσκυνῶ*: the Latin translation, or rather, perhaps, Adrian's original, reads, ‘Figuras imaginum eorum.’

It is not agreed, among learned men, at what precise time the several apostolic Fathers lived; some critics maintaining that they were contemporary with the Apostles, and others assigning to them a considerably later date: all, however, agree that the latest of them lived before the commencement of the fourth century.

JUSTIN MARTYR, ABOUT A.D. 150.

Of this holy man, whose praise has been in the churches from his own time to ours, the evidence on the subject before us is far from being either only negative, or unimportant, or equivocal. So far is he from suggesting any idea that the Christians in his time admitted images of Christ into their places of worship as objects of religious reverence, that, had images then been used, his arguments often would not only have naturally led to some notice of them, but would have necessarily required an explanation of their use, and a distinction between them and those idols the worship of which he condemns. Whether we examine the noble defences which he made before the emperors and senate of Rome, or his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, we feel it next to an impossibility either that he should not have anticipated the objection of heathen and Jewish auditors, or that they should not have objected to image-worship as an inconsistency in men, who were ever denouncing it as having originated either in man's ignorance and depravity, or in the suggestion of wicked spirits.

Take, for example, the ninth section of what is now classed as his first Defence:*

“We do not with many sacrifices and wreaths of

* Paris, 1742, p. 48.

flowers honour those whom men, bringing into form, and placing in temples, call gods; since we know them to be without spirit and dead, and not to have the form of God, (for we do not believe God to have such a form as some say they imitate for his honour,) but to have the forms and names of those who have appeared to be evil demons. Why need we say to you who know it, how the artificers dispose of the material, scraping, and cutting, and melting, and beating it? And out of it, and often out of vile vessels, only by their art changing the shape, and giving them a form, they call them gods; which we think not only an unreasonable thing, but done to the insult of God, whose name, though He has a glory and a form unutterable, is thus placed on things corruptible and requiring protection.”*

How easily and triumphantly would such a statement and reasoning have been turned against himself by his heathen audience, had Christians then placed the Saviour’s name on images of wood or stone, either carved or painted, or of ivory, or metal, and set them up, and burned incense to them, and fallen down before them!

If we examine Justin’s dialogue with Trypho the Jew, our inference from the whole is no less certain, that neither he, nor they knew anything at all of images being used by Christians. How easy and natural, for example, would it have been for Trypho and his companions to reproach Justin (at the close of his dissertation on the brazen serpent) with making images of their own accord without God’s special suspension of His own prohibition, by which alone Justin represents Moses as justified in making the brazen serpent!

* Apol. i. c. 9.

“Tell me,” he says, “was it not God who commanded, through Moses, to make neither image nor likeness of anything in heaven above or in the earth beneath? and yet He himself, in the wilderness, through Moses, caused the brazen serpent to be made; and He fixed it for a sign, by which sign those who were bitten by the serpents were cured, and He was not guilty of iniquity. For by this, as I said, He proclaimed a mystery, by which He preached that He destroyed the power of the serpent which caused Adam’s transgression; and He preached to those who believe on Him who by this sign (that is, Him who was about to be crucified) should save them from the bites of the serpent, namely, evil deeds, idolatries, and other iniquities. Now, if this be not so understood, give me some reason why Moses should set up the brazen serpent for a sign, and bid those who were bitten look upon it, and those who were bitten were cured; and this though he himself had commanded that they should altogether make no likeness of anything whatever.”*

We have seen how, in after ages, as soon as image-worship began to grow, the formation of the brazen serpent was alleged in justification both of the making and the worshipping of images in the Christian Church. Justin alludes to no religious honour paid to this serpent, and says that the formation of it was only justified by the direct suspension by God Himself of His own universal prohibition.

TATIAN, ATHENAGORAS, AND THEOPHILUS.

Precisely to the same result will a careful study of these three Christian writers lead, who lived towards

* Dial. c. 94.

the latter part of the second century. Their writings chiefly consist of defences of the Christian religion, and exposures of the fallacies and follies of heathenism. They are naturally led to speak much of the fabled deities of the pagan world, and of the images by which they were represented; and, had Christians then made use of images of our Saviour, or worshipped any representations of the Divinity, they would inevitably have been driven to distinguish between heathen worship and their own. In Tatian there are many passages bearing more or less directly on our subject,* but we need not dwell on them.

In Athenagoras, among much of similar tendency, these passages deserve to be well weighed.†

“In a word we say, Not one of them” (he has enumerated many famous images, such as Venus, the work of Praxiteles, and Æsculapius, from the hand of Phidias) “has escaped being the production of a man. If these are gods, why were they not from the first? Why are they younger than those who made them? What need have they of men and art for their existence? These are stones, and matter, and cunning device.”

“Since then, some say, These indeed are images, but those whose images they are, are gods; and that the supplications with which they approach them, and their sacrifices, are referred to those and are made to those; and that there is no other mode of approaching the gods than this, (for the gods are very difficult to be seen openly;) and since to prove that this is so, they urge the effectual energies shewn by some images; come, let us inquire what power they can have from the names assigned to them.”

How strikingly are we here reminded of the argu-

* See chap. iv. v. vi. &c.

† Chap. xvii. and xviii.

ments put forth by the advocates of image-worship among Christians! From the second Council of Nice to the Council of Trent, and thence to the present day, the argument has been the same: "We do not worship the image, but the divine being which the image represents, the original, the prototype." And how solemnly are we assured that the miracles* done by the images (merely another word for the "effectual energies" urged by the heathen on Christians in the time of Athenagoras) prove that their worship is sanctioned by heaven. If Athenagoras had been familiar with the use of images in Christian churches, could he, without any exceptions or explanations, have employed such language as this?

If we compare also this passage with a subsequent chapter, a clear proof is afforded of the futility of the distinction made, both at Nice and at Trent, between the worship given by heathens to their idols and by Christians to their images—in as much as (they say) Christians make their worship pass on to the prototype, and the heathen make theirs rest in the idols. "How comes it (you will say) that some images put forth effectual energies, if they to whom we erect them are not gods; for it is not probable that lifeless and motionless images can have any power of themselves without some one to move them?"†

So true is it, that, when Christians leave the simplicity of the Gospel, there is, if any, only a narrow and shallow stream between them and idolatry.

* See Bellarmin, vol. ii. book ii. chap. xii.

† Chap. xxiii.

SECTION III.—ST. IRENÆUS, ABOUT A. D. 180.

In the works of Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, there appears very little that bears on our immediate subject; but, certainly, whatever reflexions may be suggested by his sentiments, not a shadow of anything like image-worship, or the admission of images into the Christian churches in his time, can be found. On the contrary, if compared with the assertions and doctrines of the advocates of such worship in later times, several passages shew that they did not draw their ideas of the image of God, and the cross, and the present reign of the saints with Christ in heaven from the same fountain with himself. His works are chiefly devoted to the exposure and refutation of errors which had then crept into the Church; and he especially, and repeatedly condemns the errors of Marcion and his followers. Now Naclantus and others tell us, that Marcion and his followers were among the first heretics who opposed image-worship in the Church; but we find in Irenæus no allusion to the practice of setting up and venerating images, or to the errors of those who discountenanced such practice. This could scarcely have been so, had the practice been in existence when Irenæus lived.

Instead of arguing that Christians may make images to represent the Almighty, as Cardinal Bellarmin and others do, Irenæus speaks only of man as made in the image of God, and of that image having been made visible and permanent when the Word of God became flesh.* But of any image to represent that Saviour

* Cont. Hæres., lib. v. cap. xvi.

now, he speaks not a word, except to number the possession of such images among the faults of heretics. He speaks again and again of the cross of Christ as the instrument by which He saved man from death; but of any visible and material cross, to be set up for the purpose of being worshipped, he says not a word.

Instead of maintaining, as the Council of Trent (condemning those who hold the contrary) maintains, that the souls of the saints are already reigning with Christ, and that their bodies are to be venerated, and their sepulchres and shrines to be frequented for the purpose of obtaining their good offices with the Almighty, Irenæus holds that “the souls of Christ’s disciples go to the place assigned to them by God, and there dwell till the resurrection, waiting for the resurrection; then taking again their bodies, and rising wholly, that is bodily, as also the Lord arose, so will they come into the presence of God.”*

The passage in which Irenæus speaks of images of Christ as being in the possession of the Carpocratian heretics, and worshipped with the rites of heathenism, is very striking; and it is altogether so identifiable with a passage of Epiphanius to the same effect, that we quote both their testimonies together in this single passage :+—

“The Carpocratian heretics (from whom the Gnostics derived their origin) possessed themselves of images representing Christ, some painted in colours, some made of gold or silver, or other materials. These they affirm to be images of our Saviour, made by Pontius Pilate as resemblances of His person when He

* Lib. v. cap. xxxi.

+ See Irenæus, book i. chap. xxv.; see also Epiphanius, Hær., xxvii. (Cologne, 1682, vol. i. p. 108).

lived among men. These images they keep concealed ; but they set them up, together with images of philosophers, Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and others ; and having set them up, they worship them, and perform towards them the heathenish rites of sacrificing to them, crowning them, with other mysterious ceremonies."

This we believe to be the earliest mention of any images being possessed, for the purpose of religious worship, by any calling themselves Christians. Both Irenæus and Epiphanius describe the whole affair as the work of heretics. Like the chosen people of old, "they mingled among the heathen, and learned their works, insomuch that they worshipped their idols, which turned to their own decay," or "which were a snare unto them." Thus did image-worship derive its origin from heresy, and thus from the first was it inseparably interwoven with the superstitions of heathenism.

ST. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, ABOUT A. D. 180.

While Irenæus enables us to infer that in the Western Church, in his day, the use and worship of images was unknown, his contemporary Clement, of Alexandria in Egypt, bears irrefutable testimony, that he knew nothing of such an innovation having corrupted the purity of Christian worship in the Eastern churches. Instead of arguing, with Naclantus, Bellarmin, and others, that images of the Deity may lawfully be made and set up and venerated, he maintains, in every varied form of language, that no representation of God can be made, by the art of the carver, the goldsmith, the statuary, the carpenter, or the painter. Passage after passage leaves no room for doubt as to the impossibility of his having written

and left these statements without modification, or exceptions, or explanations, if he were aware that, in any part of the Church, his fellow-Christians used the images of saints, or angels, or the Virgin Mother, or our blessed Saviour, or the holy Trinity, in their religious services. A few specimens will be enough.

Having said, “Pythagoras prohibited the practice of engraving images of the gods on rings,”* he adds, “just as Moses long before had expressly enacted, that no statue or image must be made, either graven, or molten, or of clay, or painted; that we might not give ourselves to objects of sense, but pass on to objects to be contemplated by the mind. For the familiarity of the sight, always at hand, lessens the majesty of God, and makes it cheap; and to worship the intellectual essence through matter, is to dishonour it through sense.”†

In his allegorical interpretation of the cherubim overshadowing the ark of the covenant,‡ so far from supposing, with the advocates of image-worship now, that the people of God were at that time taught to worship those visible objects, he denies that they were intended to represent the forms of holy beings in heaven. In conveying his sentiments on this point, Clement of Alexandria employs these striking expressions:—“Whether by it [the ark] is signified the intellectual world, or God who surrounds and comprehends everything, and is without form and invisible, let the question be put off for the present; it intimates, however, the repose and rest that is with the glorifying spirits, which spirits the cherubim signify by a figure; for never surely would He who commanded

* Strom., lib. v. cap. v. † See book vi.

‡ Strom., lib. v. cap. vi.

them not to make even a graven image, Himself have shapen an image in the likeness of the holy beings [or the saints].”

TERTULLIAN, A. D. 190.—MINUTIUS FELIX.

Contemporary with Irenæus in Gaul, and Clement in Alexandria, was Tertullian. We find in his writings no intimation, that the images either of the saints or of Christ, or any representation of the Almighty, were admitted into the Christian Church in his time. And yet it is scarcely possible, that, had they been then used, he would have made no allusion to it, when he is pursuing the question, as put by the heathen in his time, “If men worship none of these things, what do they worship?”*

But he makes no allusion of the kind, nor does he (any more than Clement of Alexandria) make any exceptions or explanations with reference to the veneration of images. Had Tertullian himself used or worshipped images, or had he known of the worship and use of them in the Christian Church, he could not possibly, without any exceptions or reservations, have written passages so condemnatory of the whole system of image-worship as these:—

“Sometime in past ages there was no idol. Before the workers of this monster burst forth, there were only temples and empty buildings, as even to this day in some places the vestiges of antiquity remain. Yet idolatry was carried on not in the name, but in the deed; for even now it can be carried on outside of a temple, and without an idol. But when the devil introduced into the world framers of statues, and images, and representations of all kind, that rude work of hu-

* *Apologet.*, chap. xv.

man calamity both derived its name and proceeded from idols; thereafter every act which in any way put forth an idol became the head of idolatry. For it matters not whether the potter forms it, or the engraver cuts it out, or Phrygio weaves it; because it is of no consequence as to its material, whether the idol be formed of gypsum, or by colours, or stone, or brass, or silver, or thread. For since there can be idolatry without an idol, surely, when the idol is present, it matters not of what sort it is, of what material, of what form; let no one think that alone must be considered as an idol which is consecrated in the human form. Here it is necessary to interpret the meaning of the word. *Idos* [εἰδος] in Greek means a figure, from which is drawn the diminutive *idolon* [εἰδωλον], in our language implying 'a small figure.' Consequently every figure or small figure must be called an idol, and therefore all idolatry is service or servitude about any idol. Hence every maker of an idol is guilty of one and the same crime; unless, forsooth, the people were not guilty of idolatry, because they consecrated for themselves the image of a calf, and not of a man. God forbids an idol to be made, no less than to be worshipped. As much as the making a thing which can be worshipped precedes the worship of it, so much, if it is not lawful to worship it, must the first prohibition be, not to make it. Wherefore, in order to tear up by the roots the matter of idolatry, the divine law proclaims, 'Thou shalt not make an idol;' and, by adding 'nor the likeness of anything in heaven, in earth, or in the sea through the whole world,' He forbade these acts to the servants of God."*

One passage from Tertullian, and another from

* *De Idolat.*, chap. iii.

Minutius Felix, (whose name, therefore, though he lived in the following century, we have joined with Tertullian's in this chapter,) are quoted triumphantly by Bellarmin in proof that at all events the cross was venerated from the first. We have no doubt the sign of the cross was ever held in veneration by Christians, both before and after the great Apostle of the Gentiles exclaimed "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ;" while such veneration is as far removed from that worship of the cross in churches which Bellarmin would establish, as the temple of God is removed from idols. But the passage of Tertullian is very far from bearing the testimony which that writer assigns to it, and the language of Minutius Felix in answer to the calumny, shall speak for itself.

Bellarmin says, "Tertullian, in his 'Apologetic,' says, that Christians were called 'worshippers of the cross;'^{*} nor does he deny that to be true. Minutius Felix, in his 'Octavius,' answers the Gentiles who objected the adoration of the cross. Nor is it at all inconsistent with this that he says, 'We neither adore, nor wish for the cross;' for he is speaking of prayer properly belonging to God, of which they were accused. Meanwhile, it is evident from the objection, that the cross was in some way honoured by Christians. But certainly it would never have entered the minds of the Gentiles to object to us the adoration of the cross, unless they had seen that the cross was an object of highest veneration to Christians."[†]

Now it is remarkable that in the very same passage Tertullian tells us as expressly, that the Christians were accused of worshipping an ass's head; and just as fair would be the conclusion, that, unless the heathen had

* Religiosos crucis.

† Vol. ii. lib. ii. c. xii..

seen Christians paying some marked honour to the head of an ass, they would never have thought of making the charge. The words of Tertullian are full of sarcasm and irony: “ You will not deny that all cattle, and the whole tribe of nags, together with their Epona, are worshipped by you. And perhaps we are found fault with for this reason, because, among the worshippers of all beasts and cattle, we alone are devoted to the ass! Moreover, any one who thinks us worshippers of the cross, shall be our fellow-worshipper whenever a block of wood is propitiated.”*

Tertullian adds that others, with more humanity and probability, thought that the sun was the god of Christians; and he tells us that, just before, a picture had been put forth with this inscription: “ The god of Christians, Onocoetes”—a figure, with the ears of an ass, with one foot hoofed, carrying a book, and wearing a toga. “ We laughed,” he says, “ at both the name and the figure;” and then he begins a passage of much eloquence with this declaration: “ What we worship is the one God.”

There is a close resemblance between these passages of Tertullian and some of Minutius Felix, in his interesting work called “ Octavius.” He records the fact that Christians were accused of regarding the head of an ass as a divinity; with worshipping a guilty man and his cross; with being initiated by the murder and the blood of an infant; with adopting other objects of religious worship not to be named. The same reasoning which would argue from these charges, that the Christians must have worshipped the cross, would establish with equal certainty that there was a foundation in fact for the rest. As to the charge more immediately

* Apol. i. 16.

connected with our subject, his words are these: "Whereas you assign for our religion a guilty man and his cross, you wander far from the neighbourhood of truth, who suppose that either a guilty man deserved to be, or an earthly man could be believed to be God;" and then he says distinctly, "Crosses, moreover, we neither worship, nor wish for. You, perhaps [the heathen], who consecrate wooden gods, adore wooden crosses, as parts of your gods." *

To say that Minutius Felix is here speaking of the supreme worship due only to the Almighty, and not of that relative and transitive worship which is due to images of the Saviour and the cross, is to put forth a groundless and gratuitous assumption. The subtleties and refined distinctions which Cardinal Bellarmin attempts to make, had no existence in the time of Minutius Felix, nor for many centuries after. He says, "You charge us with religiously venerating the cross. I answer, We neither worship crosses, nor wish for them."

SECTION IV.—ORIGEN, A. D. 230.

Before the death of Tertullian, flourished Origen, one of the most celebrated lights of the Primitive Church, bred up in the faith of the Gospel, and, as ancient records say, himself the son of a Christian martyr. In his voluminous works, testimony, clear and abundant, is borne not only against the prevalence of image-worship in his day, but also against the lawfulness of Christians making or using any statues, images, or pictures whatsoever. Origen repeatedly speaks of the mercy-seat, and the cherubim overshadowing it; but he is far from intimating that they were objects

* Octavius, chap. xxviii. and xxix.

of religious worship to the Israelites under the elder covenant.

A passage, to which we have already adverted, not only shews that the sweeping and universal distinction, drawn by the Council of Trent itself, and by the maintainers of image-worship, between the heathen worshipping their idols as gods, and Christians worshiping images as representatives of the original beings whose names they bear, is altogether inconsistent with the facts of the case; but it also proves most clearly that, in Origen's time, the most unenlightened among Christians, by abstaining altogether from the use of such works of the craftsman for religious purposes, were, in his opinion, far more advanced in true spiritual wisdom than those heathen who declared that, though they worshipped at or before the image, the image was not the object of their worship, but merely the representation of an unseen being. Could he have ventured on such a statement as the following, when arguing against the impugners of our holy faith, if Christians had in his day made any religious use whatever of images?

“Celsus says, that others [Christians] are most uninstructed, and slaves, and unlearned; because, I presume, they are not acquainted with his ordinances, nor educated in the learning of the Greeks: but we say that those are most uninstructed who are not ashamed to address lifeless objects; for health calling upon that which is weak; for life asking that which is dead; for succour imploring that which is most helpless. And though some say, These are not their gods, but imitations of the true [gods], and their symbols; not one whit less are these uninstructed, and slaves, and unlearned, who imagine that there can be

in the hands of artificers imitations of the Godhead: The very lowest among us are far removed from such ignorance and want of instruction.”*

Again and again Origen says,† that the only images of the invisible and eternal God are, first, the Word, his blessed Son; and in a secondary degree, the soul of man filled with truth and holiness, originally created after the likeness of his Creator. Of all other images, whether they be called idols, or images, or statues, or paintings—of whatever materials, and with whatever skill fabricated—whether of the supreme God or of inferior beings, he speaks, without exception, in terms of abhorrence and contempt. Indeed, the Roman Catholic editor of his works, Delarue,‡ (the edition, let it be especially observed, being dedicated to the Pope,) confesses that Origen (with others) not only affirms that images are vain, and that no image of God ought to be attempted, but also that the laws prohibiting the Jews from making any images are binding on Christians. No one who reads his works can come to a different conclusion: we must here, however, limit our quotations to a very few passages.

“To these [objections of Celsus]§ we reply, that those persons are sitting and fixed in darkness who look to the vile arts of painters, statuaries, and image-

* *Cont. Cels.*, lib. vi. 14.

† *E. g. Cont. Cels.*, iv. 85, viii. 66.

‡ See *Cont. Cels.*, lib. viii. cap. xvii. Delarue, in the same note, refers to some authors to shew that there was some approved use of images in the first centuries. We shall not omit an examination of the passages to which he points, when we review the authors in which they are said to exist; but for the passage which he quotes from Tertullian, whom we have already examined, we search in vain.

§ *Cont. Cels.*, lib. vi. cap. lxvi.

makers, and are not willing to look upwards and to mount in their mind from visible things and all objects of sense to the Creator of all, who is the Light; and that every one is in the light who follows the rays of the Word, which shews from what ignorance and impiety, and want of knowledge as to the Divine nature, those objects are worshipped instead of God, and which leads the mind of one who desires to be saved, to God, who is uncreated and is above all."

In another passage, referring to those who prided themselves upon their knowledge of divine things derived from philosophy, he speaks thus: "God, seeing the arrogance and the supercilious contempt towards others of those who thought greatly of themselves, their knowledge of God, and their having derived from philosophy an acquaintance with divine things, and yet, equally with the most illiterate, had recourse to images, and their shrines and their boasted mysteries, chose the small things of the world, the most simple among Christians, (living a more sober and pure life than many philosophers,) in order that he might put the wise to the blush—men who are not ashamed to address lifeless things as gods, or as images of gods. For what sensible person would not laugh at a man, who, after such and so many philosophical dissertations on God or gods, looks to images, and either offers up his prayer to them, or BEHOLDING THEM REFERS IT TO THE BEING CONTEMPLATED IN HIS MIND, to whom he fancies that he ought to ascend from that which is seen, and which is the symbol of him." "But the Christian, even the unlearned, is persuaded that every place of the world is a part of the whole, the whole world being God's temple; and in every place praying, closing the eyes of sense, and lifting up those

of the soul, mounts up beyond the whole world; and does not stop even at the arch of heaven, but in his soul rising into the place above the heavens, led by the Spirit of God, and being as it were beyond the world, sends up his prayers to God; and that, not for every sort of gifts whatever, for he has learned from Jesus not to seek for any trifling thing, that is, any object of sense, but only for those great and divine objects which, being given by God, tend to lead to the happiness which is with Him, through His Son, the Word, who is God."*

The views professed by the advocates of image-worship in these latter days ^{are} identifiable with those which Origen records as the views put forth by his heathen contemporaries in their defence of idol-worship.

His arguments against those who, though they acknowledged their images not to be gods, yet, to the great peril of others, less enlightened, allowed themselves to be seen praying to them, apply, with a force that comes quite home to those who even now, though they declare "an image to be a lifeless lump of matter," yet in the face of the people pray before the images of our Saviour, the Virgin, and saints, and to the outward eye appear at least to be praying to the images. The great scandal and spiritual danger which Origen represents as inseparable from such practices among the heathen, are at least equally interwoven with modern practice in the Church of Rome. Human nature is the same, and the same causes must be expected to work the same effects; and the worship of the Almighty is of too holy and pure and delicate a nature to admit of such risks as those to which the advocates of image-worship expose their fellow-

* Cont. Cels., lib. vii. cap. xliv.

worshippers, however subtle and refined the fancied distinctions may be, behind which they would shelter their innovations from the condemnation of God's word, or the voice of the Primitive Church. "It is not only foolish," says Origen, "to pray to images, but also for any one to be carried away by the many to pretend to worship images . . . for there ought to be nothing but what is genuine in the soul of one who is truly pious towards the Divinity. But we also, for this reason, do not honour images, that we may not (as far as in us lies) fall into the notion that images are other gods. On this ground we blame Celsus, and all who acknowledge that these are not gods, because the honour shewn by them to the image appears to be paid by wise men; and the body of the people follow their example, not only in being carried away to think they ought to worship them, but also in falling into the belief that they are gods, and in not enduring to hear it said that the images are not gods which are worshipped by them."*

The passage to which (as we have already observed) M. Delarue, the Roman Catholic editor of Origen, appends his confession that the evidence of Origen is altogether, throughout, and in all points, directly contrary to the worship or use of images in the Christian Church, is very beautiful. In it Origen says that the only images made by a Christian are the imitations framed in his heart of the excellences and virtues of his Saviour, the image of his Creator; images, he says, they are, such as the Supreme God desires.†

* Cont. Cels., lib. vii. cap. lxv.

† Cont. Cels., lib. viii. cap. xvii.

ST. CYPRIAN, A. D. 258.

Referring the reader to our Inquiry as to the Invocation of Saints,* for the glowing sentiments of this holy martyr on the subject of a Christian's prayer, and of his hope in death, we have little to add here as to Cyprian's testimony on the worship of images. No advocate for that worship appears to have ever referred to his works as containing one expression in its favour: certainly, all his evidence is directly against it. Like those who preceded him from the time of the Apostles, and like those who for three centuries or more followed him, he knew not of such a practice in the Church, and we can expect from such persons no allusion to it. But in his writings many passages assure us, that, had he known and approved of such doctrines and practices, he could never have written as he has done on the worship of heathen images, without any modification or exception in favour of the images used and worshipped by Christians. Had he, for example, regarded as the doctrine of Christ, that, according to the decree of Trent, the disciple of the Gospel should kneel down and bend himself, as the practice now is, before any image whatever, could St. Cyprian have written thus, even when dissuading a man from worshipping his pagan gods?†

“ Why do you humble yourself and bow down to false gods? Why do you bend your body, as captive, before foolish images and figments of earth? God made you upright; and whilst other animals look downwards, and are bent down, (their formation verg-

* Primitive Christian Worship, p. 162.

† Ad Demetrianum.

ing towards the earth,) your form is erect, and your countenance is lifted above, up to heaven and to God. Thither look; thither lift up your eyes; seek God in the places on high. That you may be delivered from things below, lift up your breath, raised to high and heavenly things."

GREGORY THAUMATURGUS—METHODIUS—
LACTANTIUS—ARNOBIUS, A. D. 300.

We are not aware that any passage in the genuine works of Gregory Thaumaturgus, or Methodius, has been appealed to in proof of the existence and worship of images in their time. The evidence of Lactantius, strong, clear, and conclusive against the supposition that images of any description were regarded as objects of reverence when he lived, has been already quoted, when we shewed that the distinction made by the Council of Trent between the worship offered to idols by the heathen of old, and to images by the Roman Church now, was entirely the creature of the imagination, and not founded in fact. Indeed, so free is Lactantius from any of those superstitions, whether in the adoration of the Virgin Mary and of saints and angels, or in the worship of images, and so strongly do his words tell against them, that some Roman Catholic writers speak of him disparagingly, as one who was more familiarly versed in Cicero than in the Holy Scriptures. He was, indeed, well acquainted with classical literature; but he made all his learning bear upon the religion of Christ—he "drew all his studies this way."* The testimony of Lactantius brings us beyond the close of the third century.

* We must observe here, that the poem called "De Passione Do-

Lactantius was himself the pupil of Arnobius,* the African, who wrote a voluminous work against the superstitions of heathenism. On the subject before us the expressions of Arnobius are strong and clear, and are as utterly irreconcileable with any idea of images being employed by Christians in their worship in his time, as they are with the vainly attempted distinction between the worship of images by Christians, and of idols by the heathen. We will only cite two passages, each in his sixth book:—

“ Ye say, ‘ We worship the gods through the images.’ What then? If these images did not exist, would the gods not know that they were worshipped, nor suppose any honour to be paid to them by you? It is then through certain byways, and through certain trusts, (as we say,) they take and receive your acts of worship; and before those to whom that service is due are sensible of it, you, having first sacrificed to the images, authoritatively send to them what belongs to another, certain leavings as it were. And what can be done more unjust, more disrespectful, more severe, than to recognise one as a god, and offer your supplication to another thing —to hope for help from a divine being, and pray to an image which has no sense? I ask, Is it anything else than, according to the common proverb, to beat the carpenter when you would strike the fuller? and when you seek counsel of a man, to ask from asses and pigs their sentiments on what should be done?”†—“ But

mini,” in which occurs a line referred to, not by Bellarmin only, but even in the Catechism of the Council of Trent,

“ Bend the knee, and adore the venerable wood of the cross”— is confessedly spurious, “ the work of an uncertain author, not of Lactantius.”

* Leips, 1816.

† C. 9.

ye say, ‘ You are mistaken and are in error ; for we do not consider materials of brass, or silver, or gold, or other things of which the statues are made, to be *of themselves* gods and sacred divinities; but in these materials we worship and venerate those gods whom the holy dedication brings in, and causes to dwell in the images wrought by the craftsman.’ No bad or contemptible reason, by which any one, whether dull or most wise, could believe that the gods, leaving their own abode, that is heaven, do not refuse nor avoid to enter into little earthly habitations ! nay, moreover, that by the rite of dedication they are compelled to acquiesce in an union with images ! Do your gods take up their abode and dwell in gypsum and tiles ? nay, are your gods the minds, and spirits, and souls of tiles and gypsum ? and do they, in order that the vilest things may become more sacred, suffer themselves to be shut up, and lie hidden within the restraint of an obscure dwelling ?”*

Throughout, Arnobius, in a vein of extraordinary irony, presses home on the heathen the absurdities and inconsistencies in the use of images, as channels by which to approach the original superhuman being. And almost every sentence bears with equal force against the use of images by Christians. When, for example, we read the following passage, we are irresistibly led to think of the thousands of miraculous images of the Virgin Mary worshipped throughout the world :

“ Let us suppose that there are ten thousand images of Vulcan in the whole world : Is it competent for one person to be in those ten thousand at one time ?”

* C. 17.

SECTION V.—EUSEBIUS, A. D. 314.

To the testimony of this ancient and renowned Father, bearing decidedly and confessedly against the worship and use of images in the Christian Church, our attention has been already drawn, in consequence of the scornful and summary condemnation of him on the charge of heresy, by the second Council of Nice, and the resolution of that council by acclamation not to allow his opinions on the subject even to be read.

We have already intimated, that for a copy of the letter which contains the chief evidence of Eusebius against image-worship, we are indebted to the records of the second Nicene Council; and since, in quoting it, they do not dispute its genuineness, but only cast it unceremoniously aside as the testimony of a learned man who had fallen into great errors, we insert it here, as the indisputable production of that celebrated man.

“In the same manner, also, Eusebius, the son of Pamphilus, speaks thus to Constantia Augusta, who had requested that an image of Christ might be sent by him to her:—‘But since you have written about some image, as it were of Christ, wishing that image to be sent to you by us, what and what sort of an image is that which you call an image of Christ? Is it the True and Unchangeable, bearing His natural characteristic features? or that which He took upon Himself, clothing Himself with the form of a servant? Concerning, however, the form of God, I do not myself think that you are inquiring; since you were once for all taught by Him that no one knoweth the Father

but the Son, nor can any one form a worthy knowledge of the Son except the Father only who begat Him.' And then a little after: 'But surely you must, at all events, be inquiring for the image of the form of a servant, and of the flesh with which He was clothed for our sakes. But we have learned that this was mingled with the glory of the Godhead, and that the mortal was swallowed up by the life.' And a little after: 'Who then would be able to engrave with dead and lifeless colours, and lights and shades, the brilliant and blazing splendours of such dignity and glory, whereas not even the divine disciples could endure to look on Him upon the mount, but fell upon their faces, confessing that what they saw was more than they could bear? If then at that time His incarnate form was changed by the Godhead dwelling in it, what must we say, when having put off this mortality, and washed off the corruption, he changed the appearance of the form of a servant, to the glory of the Lord and God after His victory over death, after His return to heaven, after His sitting on the royal throne at the right hand of the Father, after His rest in the indescribable and ineffable bosom of His Father? To which when He mounted and was restored, the powers of heaven praised Him, saying, Ye princes, lift up your gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in!'"*

We cannot wonder at men, determined to establish image-worship at any cost, resolving to reject such evidence as this. And here we might have left the evidence of this great father of the Christian Church. The advocates (unhappily for Christian truth, the suc-

* 6th Act, vol. vii. p. 505.

cessful enactors) of the worship of images being judges, the testimony of Eusebius is altogether against them. But since subsequent and modern defenders of that worship have cited him as a witness of the early existence of images in the Church, we must refer to that fact which he records and for which he is cited. His own comment on that fact would, we should have thought, in the judgment of the large majority of those who think and reason on similar points, have induced the advocates of the CHRISTIAN veneration of images, instead of triumphantly appealing to it, to have either, like the second Council of Nicæa, rejected his evidence altogether, or at least explained what he says; for, as it sounds to us, he accounts for the image of our Saviour being placed where he says it was seen in his day, on the ground that they were heathens and idolaters who placed it there.

He tells us that there were in Cæsarea two statues in brass, which, they say, were [almost three hundred years before] put up before her door by the woman whom our blessed Lord restored — the one statue representing a man stretching his hand toward the woman, the other a woman on her knees looking to the man. He says, too, that an herb growing up to the folds of the vestment cured all sorts of diseases. And he undoubtedly seems to think it not improbable, that a Gentile so relieved should have put up such a monument of her recovery. But what support can the Christian worshipper of images derive from that fact, when Eusebius himself adds this reflexion? We quote his very words: "And it is no wonder that those of old among the Gentiles, being benefited by our Saviour, made these things. We have heard of like-nesses of Paul and Peter, and of Christ Himself, pre-

served in pictures ; the ancients naturally in this way being accustomed to honour them as Saviours, ACCORDING TO THE HEATHEN CUSTOM prevailing among men.”*

Granting, then, that the words mean (what few scholars will without hesitation pronounce them to mean) that Eusebius saw the statues himself, yet he ascribes the very erection of them to principles of heathenism.

The end of these statues is remarkable. That two statues were there in the time of Eusebius, there can be no reasonable question ; though that they were (*as they told him*) put up by the woman miraculously cured by Christ three centuries before, we have every reason to doubt. History says, that Julian had them removed to put his own statue in their place, and that the people broke them to pieces ; but that the Christians gathered the fragments together, and laid them up in the church. This has been represented as a proof that images were then,† at least, admitted into the church ; but an equally credible account tells, that these fragments were (not put together and placed in the church as a statue, but) put into the vestry, and preserved with due care, but by no means religiously revered or worshipped.‡

We need no further evidence of Eusebius ; yet we must remind the reader, that, on the subject before us there is much matter of lively interest to be found in his works. In that part of his “ *Preparatio Evangelica* ”§ where he tells us that for one hundred and seventy years from the foundation of the city no image, whether

* Hist. vii. 14.

† Bellarmin, tom. ii. lib. ii. cap. ix.

‡ Sozomen, lib. v. cap. xxii. Philostorgius, lib. vii. cap. iii.

§ Præp. Evan. ix. 6.

of statuary or painting, of any god, was allowed in ancient Rome, there are many facts and sentiments, bearing on our subject, well worthy of the perusal of a Christian classical scholar. In other parts of his labours much appears which could not have come from the pen of any Christian who was conscious that in the Christian Church images of gold, and silver, and ivory, and painting, were used in the service of the Lord. We would, as a specimen, cite one. Eusebius having quoted a passage of Porphyry setting forth how the gods had been represented by images of gold and ivory, and Parian marble of exquisite workmanship, comments upon the passage thus: "These are the assertions of Porphyry, than which what can be more disgraceful to men, who speak of base things in dignified language? And what can be more forced and violent, than that lifeless materials, gold and silver and the like, should bear the likeness of the light of the gods, and to say that they are the representations of a heavenly and ethereal nature?" We cannot advert to the next sentence, without feeling how closely applicable to our own judgment on the faith and practice of the Church of Rome, is the sentiment of Eusebius as to those whom he calls the moderns among the idolaters, when he tells us, "These are fallacies of the moderns; the ancients never even thought of such things in their dreams!"*

* *Præp. Evan.* iii. 7.

ST. ATHANASIUS, A. D. 340.*

To the evidence also of this renowned champion of the true faith our attention has already been drawn by the proceedings of the second Council of Nice, though the indignity put upon him was indeed very different from that which was shewn to the memory of Eusebius. The members would not suffer the evidence of Eusebius against image-worship to be read, because they charged him with heresy: they cited as the production of Athanasius a work which bears on its very forehead the stamp of its spurious origin. Here, as on other occasions, we have the painful task of stating that though, in his controversial works, Cardinal Bellarmin cites this paper as the genuine work of Athanasius,† yet, in his work on ecclesiastical writers,‡ which appeared subsequently, he tells us, that, though this work was cited entire, as the work of Athanasius, in the second Nicene Council, yet it was not his, but a work of much more recent date! This view he confirms by citing Sigebert, who says, "This miracle took place A. D. 766, at that time, namely, when the question as to the worship of images was agitated. For God willed by this miracle to confound the heretical Iconoclasts." This criticism of Bellarmin not only reflects on himself for quoting as evidence what he elsewhere pronounces to be spurious, but on the second Nicene Council, who, within about twenty years of the date of the supposed miracle, fathers on St. Athanasius an offspring which confessedly, according to this statement, could not have existed till at least four centuries after his time. Bellarmin, though he

* Athanasius, *Opera*. Patav. 1777. † Lib. ii. cap. xii. ‡ p. 51.

refers in some cases from his later work to the earlier, yet here takes no notice of his former error, but leaves it to remain just as though his views were the same. It is also observable, that, though the Pope very lately* caused Bellarmin's works to be reprinted from the Vatican press, this work of his, which contradicts his former treatises in many points, is not suffered to appear again. The Benedictine editor's judgment is couched in these strong terms: "That this little work is not the work of Athanasius, but of some unskilful and ineloquent person, there is no learned man who will not decide; consequently we need not spend our time in proving it." The story is told in various ways, scarcely any two versions of it being alike; but the general outline is this:†—

In the city of Beryte lived a Christian in a very small dwelling, where he had a picture of our Saviour hanging against the wall. Wishing to remove into a larger dwelling, he left this chamber, taking all his goods and chattels with him; but, AS PROVIDENCE ORDERED IT, he forgot the portrait of our Lord. Jews abounded in that city, and one of them took the dwelling which the Christian had left; but he never noticed the picture, till one day a brother Jew, whom he had invited to dine with him, in the midst of their dinner saw the picture against the wall, and remonstrated with his host, who declared he had never seen it. But the guest reported the fact to the chief-priests, who, with the elders and a crowd of Jews, rushed into the house, and having expelled the man from the house and from the synagogue, proceeded to shew all the same indignities to the image which their fathers had shewn to

* A. D. 1832—1840.

† Vol. ii. p. 288.

our Saviour. On their piercing his side with a spear, blood and water gushed out, with which they filled a vessel; and being determined to try whether it could work the same miracles which Christ had wrought, they applied it to multitudes who were diseased, and all were immediately healed. Then they changed their minds, and declared themselves Christians, making the profession of their faith in the several articles most minutely; and going to the bishop implored him to baptize them, to convert their chief synagogue into a Christian church, and the other synagogues into shrines of the martyrs. The bishop then ordained from among them priests, deacons, sub-deacons, and readers; and thus was there great joy in that city.

This is the outline of the story read in the second Nicene Council as the work of St. Athanasius; at the conclusion of which Constantine, a bishop of Cyprus, exclaimed, “Behold! he who derives his name from immortality* has caused this assembly to be afflicted, and to shed tears, since he has not only acknowledged them [the images] to be venerable, but also to have wrought cures.”

It was on this occasion that the Patriarch Tarasius anticipated any such objection to the story as might arise from the fact, that images no longer in their time wrought miracles. “Should any one ask the reason why images in our time do not work miracles, we answer, that, as the Apostle says, signs are for those who believe not, and not for those who believe. Thus, those who then approached the image were unbelievers.”†

* Athanasius in Greek means *immortal*.

† Act iv.

It is, however, remarkable, that the miracles said in subsequent ages to have been wrought by an image, were almost always wrought in the midst of those who were already believers in its miraculous powers, and not among those who rejected them.

Another work* has been cited, as from the pen of Athanasius, in which our Lord is represented to have held a conversation with his mourning Church, as she lamented on account of His image left her by the Apostles, and to have comforted her by an assurance, that, whosoever should deny His unpolluted image, He would deny that man before His Father and the angels.† There is no such work from the pen of St. Athanasius. It is evidently one of those very many writings which, as the Benedictine editor tells us, “were falsely, and with impunity, attributed to Athanasius in those ages which were most favourable to fraud; but which, on the revival of literature, were discarded.”‡

In the genuine works of St. Athanasius not one word can be found to countenance the idea that images were in use in the Christian Church in his day; while, like the productions of his predecessors, his works contain abundant intimations to the contrary.

The language in which he speaks of the folly and preposterous absurdity of living and rational men falling down before the senseless and lifeless images of their gods, is wonderfully applicable to the practice now observed in the Romish Church, of falling down before senseless and lifeless images of saints and the Holy Virgin and our blessed Lord. Even were the

* *De sanctis Patribus et Prophetis.*

† See Bishop Jewell, Article XIV.

‡ Preface to vol. ii. p. iv.

laboured distinction between idols and images as well founded in reality as it is fanciful, Athanasius' words would not on that account be less cogent on the subject before us:—

“In worshipping stones and wood, they do not see that similar things they tread under foot and burn, while parts of these they address as gods; and what a little before they put to common use, that in their folly, having cut it into shape, they reverence; not seeing nor considering at all that they are worshipping not gods, but the art of the carver. For as long as the stone is unhewn and the material unwrought, so long they tread them under foot, and use them for their own purposes, often of the most dishonourable kind; but as soon as the artist has applied to them the rules of his own science, and given to the material the form of a man or woman, then they acknowledge their obligations to the artist, and thereafter worship as God, what they purchased of the statuary. And often, too, the image-maker himself, as if forgetting what he himself made, prays to his own works: things which a little before he was scraping and cutting, after exercising his skill on them, he addresses as gods. But if these things must be admired, the right course would be to praise the skill of the artist, and not to set a higher value on what he fabricated, than on the maker himself; for it was not the material that adorned and deified his art, but his art the material. It were then far more reasonable for them to worship the artist rather than his work, as well because he preceded in existence the gods which were produced by his art, as because, just as he willed it, so they came into being. But now, setting justice aside, and dishonouring science and art, they worship what was produced by science and art; and when the

mortal who made them is dead, they honour as immortal beings what was made by him,—things which, without meeting with daily attention, in time disappear by their own natural decay. And how can any one refuse to pity such men, because they who themselves enjoy sight, worship things which see not; themselves possessed of hearing, they pray to things that hear not; and men who by nature are endued with life and reason, address as gods those who do not so much as move, and are also lifeless; and what is most marvellous, the beings whom they guard and keep under their control they themselves serve as their masters? And let no one suppose I am saying this at random, or charging them falsely; for the proof of these things meets our very eyes, and whoever will may witness the like.”*

In another passage, substituting the saints and the Blessed Virgin for the secondary gods or ambassadors, or angels and messengers, invoked by the heathen as intercessors and mediators with the Supreme Being, we might apply the reproofs of Athanasius directly to the worshippers of angels and saints and the Virgin, and their images, now. Every sentence reminds us either of those excuses in the Roman Church which apologise for the use of images as being unlearned men’s books, or else of those doctrines which encourage the believer who is afraid to present his suit immediately to our heavenly Father, to apply to Him through created intercessors and mediators:—“You were afraid,” says the Romanist, “to approach the Father, frightened by only hearing of Him. He gave you Jesus for a Mediator, but perhaps even in Him you fear the Divine Majesty. You wish to have an advo-

* Cont. Gent. cap. xiii.

cate even with Him; betake yourself to Mary."* Identifiable with this, St. Athanasius describes to us a state of feeling among the pagans, with whom he thus remonstrates:†—

"With regard to their more profound apology, any one might properly answer them: If it is not for the manifestation of the Deity himself, O Greeks! that these things are fabricated by you, but for the presence of angels [or messengers], then why do you make the images through whom ye invoke those powers superior and above the very powers invoked? For though ye carve the forms, as ye say, for the sake of gaining a notion concerning God, ye invest those very images with the honour and with the address of God himself, and that under the influence of no pious feeling. For while you confess that the power of the Deity far exceeds the insignificancy of the images, and, on this account, do not dare through them to call upon God, but only on the inferior powers, you yourselves, passing over them [the inferior powers], apply to stones and wood the address of that Being whose presence ye fear, and call them gods, instead of stones and man's device, and worship them. If, as you falsely pretend, these are as letters teaching you the knowledge of God, it is not fair to honour the sign above the thing signified. If you possessed sound reason, you would not devolve on matter so important a mark of the Godhead; nay, you would not prefer the sculptured image to the man who sculptured it. For even if, like letters, they did altogether convey the manifestation of God, and thus, as signifying God, were worthy of deification, at all events the man who

* Gabriel Biel, lect. xxxii., on the Canon of the Mass.

† Cont. Gent. cap. xxi.

carved and sculptured them (I repeat it, the artist) ought much more to be deified, as being far more powerful and divine than they, inasmuch as they were put forth and shaped according to his will. If, then, the writings are deserving of admiration, much more does the writer surpass them in admiration, because of his art and the science of his mind. Consequently, if they are not on this account worthy to be regarded as gods, again we may put the question as to the madness of having idols, calling upon men to explain the reason of giving them a form or figure."

The evidence of St. Athanasius brings us down into the middle of the fourth century.

CHAPTER III.

SECTION I.

BEFORE, however, we proceed in our further examination of the testimony of individual Christian writers, we must direct the reader's attention to a most important decree of the Council of Elliberis, or Elvira, in Spain. The precise year of that council is not ascertained; but no authorities assign to it an earlier date than the commencement, nor a more recent date than the first quarter, of the fourth century; it is generally considered to have been held in A. D. 306. The enactment of this council is too plain to admit of doubt; and its meaning would never have been called in question, were it not for the direct and positive evidence which it bears on the views taken of image-worship in the Christian Church at that time:—

“ It is agreed that pictures ought not to be in the church, lest what is worshipped and adored should be painted on the walls.”*

Few persons, unacquainted with the strange expedients to which men devoted to a system will have recourse in defence of their errors, could imagine the variety of modes by which attempts have been made to evade the force of this decision.

Some say this single decree is a forgery; others, that

* “ *Placuit picturas in ecclesia esse non debere, ne quod colitur et adoratur in parietibus depingatur.* ” Conc. Gen. tom. i. p. 997, capit. xxxvi.

all the decrees are of the same spurious character; others, that the council erred in other points, and so too in this. But the majority of Romanist writers, acknowledging the genuineness of the decree, attempt to explain it away.

Some say it was passed only to prevent the pagans from supposing that Christians worshipped idols: others say that pictures were not forbidden to be brought into the churches and hung up there, the prohibition only being against their being painted on the walls; for which some assign as a reason, that they would be liable to be insulted by pagan persecutors, whereas pictures hung up, or statues erected, might be removed and concealed; others, that they would be liable to be injured by the damp and dirt of the walls.

Others, again,* maintain that the prohibition was solely to prevent infidels becoming acquainted with the objects of Christian worship; and so it was only forbidden to paint the pictures of the Almighty and of our Saviour on the walls of a church into which infidels might at any moment rush; whereas the same pictures, if hung up, might be removed, or have a curtain drawn before them.

Cardinal Bellarmin, having enumerated several solutions, (of which he rejects some, approves of others as good, though quite different from each other, and seems satisfied with none,) comforts his readers with the assurance, that “the council, at all events, makes more for those of the Church of Rome in other points, than it tells against them in this.”†

* See Mendoza's Notes on the Council, tom. i. p. 1240. See also Cardinal Bona, Res Liturg. lib. i. cap. xvi. n. ii. See also Bingham, book viii. chap. viii.

† Bellarmin, tom. ii. lib. ii. cap. ix.

The plain, unsophisticated meaning of the council every unprejudiced and disinterested judge must pronounce to be this, that no pictures whatsoever should be admitted into the churches, lest, step by step, one innovation following another, at last the practice should reach such a height as to admit even figures representing the divine objects of Christian worship to be painted on the walls—an evil not to be endured.

SECTION II.—ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, A.D. 380.

Cyril, Patriarch of Jerusalem, forms one of the links which connect the testimonies of those primitive writers who wrote before or at the time of the Council of Nice with those who followed it.*

The Benedictine editor† of his works is anxiously intent on establishing the sameness of Cyril's teaching with the doctrines and practices of the Romish Church. He not only devotes to this a long and elaborate treatise by way of introduction, but, throughout the whole work, omits no single opportunity of arguing in favour of the distinguishing tenets and rites of that Church.

On the subject of our present inquiry he appeals to passages, which, if they have any bearing at all on the point at issue, carry at all events strong negative evidence against image-worship; while he cannot adduce a single passage, which either if naturally interpreted speaks in its favour, or by any ingenuity can be forced so to speak. With regard to the passages which are held by many to be interpolations, relating to the finding of the cross by Helena, and the distri-

* Romish Worship of the Virgin, p. 175. "What is Romanism?" No. 13.

† M. Touteé. Venice, 1763.

bution of it piecemeal throughout the world, it is not necessary to speak in this place, because they do not at all involve the adoration of a cross in the Christian Church. Neither need we entertain the question as to the genuineness of the letter to Constantius, in which is the account of a miraculous appearance of a cross in the sky over Jerusalem; the only question before us being, what evidence do the works of Cyril of Jerusalem give of images having been admitted into the Church in his day, and made objects of religious worship? The first passage is cited by the Second Council of Nice, and commented upon as we shall see.

“What notion have you of Nebuchodonosor? Have you not heard out of the Scriptures, that he was blood-thirsty, savage, with the disposition of a lion? Have you not heard that he cast out the bones of the kings from their tombs into the open day? that he led the people captive? that he put out the eyes of the king, who had first seen his children slain with the sword? Have you not heard that he broke the cherubim to pieces? (I do not mean the intellectual ones; far from it; do not entertain such a thought; but the sculptured ones) and the mercy-seat, from the midst of which God spake with a voice?* The veil of sanctification he trod under foot; seizing the altar, he carried it away into an idol’s place; he plundered all the offerings; the temple he burnt to the foundations. What punishments did he deserve for destroying the kings, burning the sacred things, taking the people captive, and placing the holy things within the idol’s place? did he not deserve ten thousand deaths?”†

The reader probably may doubt how this passage

* The citation by the second Nicene Council stops here.

† Cateches. ii. cap. xvii.

proves the point for which it was cited, namely, that images are to be received into Christian churches, and not only honoured, but worshipped. It is, indeed, strange to find such a passage quoted for such a purpose; the records of the council, however, supply us with the use to which it was applied: "Let us observe," said the President Tarasius, "how Nebuchodonosor is blamed for overturning the cherubim, and what punishment he suffered."—"After his error," responded the council, "followed his penalty."—"Therefore," rejoined Tarasius, "every one who turns a sacred thing out of the church, and overturns it, falls under the same penalty."*

On this passage we need make no further comment, except perhaps so far as to observe that, whereas modern Romanists represent the cherubim as having been objects of religious worship, Cyril seems to have had no idea of the kind. But the next passage appears to negative all supposition that Cyril was aware of any use of images in the Church; the only image of God which he, with his contemporaries, habitually contemplated, being man. Quoting the passage literally, and appending the Romanist's comment upon it, we shall leave both to speak for themselves, and proceed. The passage is this:†—

"If you inquire into the cause of Christ's coming, betake yourself to the first book of the Scriptures. In six days God created the world; but the world was for the sake of man. The sun shines with brightest beams, but it was made to give light to man; and all living creatures were made in order to serve us; and shrubs and trees were appointed for our enjoyment. All the works of creation were beautiful; yet not one

* Act v.

† Cateches. xii. cap. cv.

of them was an image of God, but man alone. The sun was created only by a command; but man was formed by the hands of God, 'Let us make man according to our image and likeness.' The wooden image of a king is honoured; how much more the rational image of God. Yet this, the greatest of the works, when dwelling in paradise, the envy of the devil cast out; and the enemy rejoiced over the fallen object of his enmity. Now would you wish that the enemy should continue to rejoice?"

Such is the passage cited, and the Editor's comment inferring from this that the material images of Christ and his saints are to be worshipped by us now, is as follows:—

"John of Damascus from this deduces an argument confirming, on the authority of Cyril, the worship of the sacred images; and it is a sound consequence. For to an image of an emperor we pay the honour due to emperors themselves; consequently, it is right that the worship due to Christ and His saints should be paid to their images. And if man, on account of the image of God which he bears, is so worthy of honour, that Christ did not disdain to come down from heaven to restore him, are not the images of Christ and the saints worthy of some honour to be paid by us?"

Another instance of the same over-eagerness in Romanist authors to enlist anything whatever that may give some show of antiquity to their present practice, occurs in a passage where Cyril, in contrasting the soldiers who watched our Lord's sepulchre with Christian kings, speaks thus of the church in which he was then delivering his catechetical instruction.

"By a bribe they persuade the soldiers; but they do not persuade our present kings. The soldiers of

that time for money betrayed the truth, but our present kings through their piety have built this holy church in which we are, the Church of the Resurrection of God our Saviour, adorned with silver and gold, and enriched with valuables of silver and gold and precious stones." To make up for what Cyril has omitted, the commentator enumerates a catalogue of what he conceives to be comprised in those general terms which Cyril employs; "that is to say, sacred books, vestments, chalices, veils, candlesticks, and, perhaps, also pictures." Cyril makes no mention of any such picture or statue of saint or angel, or the Virgin, or our blessed Lord.

We have seen how the modern defenders of image-worship maintain that the brazen serpent, being a type of Christ crucified, was to the Jews an object of religious worship. Not so St. Cyril: he thus argues from the type to the divine antitype; but he says nothing of inherent or imputed divinity in the brazen serpent for which it should be worshipped, nor of the cross on which our blessed Lord shed His blood.*

"This type Moses completed by putting the serpent on a cross, in order that one bitten by a living serpent, and looking on the brazen serpent, believing, might be saved. What! does a brazen serpent hung on a cross save, and does the incarnate Son of God being crucified not save? Wood, in the time of Moses, sweetened water, and from the side of Jesus water flowed on the cross."

We can only advert to another passage, which Cyril could scarcely have written, had the material image of the Supreme Being at that time been an object familiar to his eyes:—

* Cateches. xiii. cap. xx.

“Sufficient to us, with a view to piety, is this alone, to know that we have a God, one God, ever existing; than whom no one is stronger,—whom no one as a successor casts out of His kingdom,—who has many names, and is almighty, and is of one and the same substance. For not because He is called good, and just, and almighty, and of Sabaoth, therefore is He different and diverse; but, being one and the same, He puts forth ten thousand operations of His divinity, not having in one portion more and in another less, but being in all like to Himself; not great in loving-kindness only, and small in wisdom, but having His wisdom and His loving-kindness equal in strength; not seeing in part, and in part deprived of sight, but being all eye, and all ear, and all mind; not, like ourselves, in part understanding, and in part ignorant. To say so would be blasphemy and unworthy of the Divine nature. He has foreknowledge of what is, and He is holy, and omnipotent, and the best of all beings, and greater than all, and wiser than all; of whom we shall never be able to explain either the beginning, or the form, or appearance. For, says the Holy Scripture, ye have never at any time heard His voice, nor seen His shape; and thus Moses says to the Israelites, ‘Take diligent heed to your souls, because you saw no similitude.’ If it is altogether impossible for His likeness to be made to appear, will our understanding come near His nature?”

ST. HILARY, BISHOP OF POICTIERS, A. D. 360.*

This prelate, one of the brightest ornaments of the Gallican Church in her most uncorrupted state, was born,

* Verona, A. D. 1730.

as his biographers say, at Poictiers, and about A. D. 350 became bishop of his native city. His works abound with marks of pure and exalted piety.

It does not appear that the advocates of image-worship have in any instance referred to his evidence ; and we search his remains in vain for any intimation that he either approved, or even was aware, of the admission of images into Christian churches in his time. He repeatedly speaks of the image of God on earth, but it is always that inward new man of the heart, which, after God, in God's likeness, is created in righteousness and true holiness, "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created him," and an image which the Christian, he says, is ever carrying on more and more towards perfection in this life ; by his religious labours in the Lord, making progress towards eternity, and destined through eternity to remain the image of his Creator.*

Hilary tells us that the Apostles were in possession of a perfect image and likeness of our blessed Lord ; but that likeness is not in the images and pictures, sculptured or painted, of which legends tell, but in their own resemblance to Him in His divine powers and excellences :—" After this [their mission to preach the Gospel] the whole power of our Lord's excellence was transferred to the Apostles ; and those who in Adam had been formed to the image and likeness of God, now obtain the perfect image and likeness of Christ, differing nothing from the excellences of their Lord ; and those who before were earthly, are now made heavenly. And in order that they may altogether obtain the likeness of God, (agreeably to the prophecy in Genesis,) they are commanded to give freely what

* De Trinitate, lib. xi. cap. xlvi.

they have freely received, that the ministration of the free gift might itself also be free."*

Of any other image, or resemblance, or similitude of Christ, we find no trace in this spiritual Christian Father. The language in which he speaks of the expedients to which the heathen had recourse to add some dignity to their images, is in every respect equally applicable now to the lamentable superstitions which deck the images of the Virgin Mary with silks, and gold, and silver, and pearls, and tinselled ornaments, after the most gaudy fashion of the world. He says,

"The Psalmist then turns, by the word of prophecy, to banish the error of the Gentiles, that he may from the very causes of superstition convict them of their foolish and irreligious superstitions, saying, 'The images of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands; they have a mouth and speak not,' &c. Frequently, in other psalms, too, this same thing is spoken of the images of the heathen; and the whole object of the divine teaching is to turn away erring man from these pursuits of irreligion. For most persons add importance to their impieties, seeking, by expensive metals, to invest with honour the gods whom they have made for themselves, by forming them of gold and silver. But by this they impart to them only as much as they can, namely, an image of a mouth, eyes, ears, nose, hands, and feet; adoring their gods in the form of a dead body, the mouth of which, as soon as the spirit is flown, is dumb, the eyes dull, the ears deaf, the nose without spirit, the hands loosened, the feet stiff, the whole body motionless. But to the error of these men is attached what they could never

* Comment. in Matth. cap. x. c. iv.

have even hoped for, that they should be like those whom they adore; the worshippers should be on a footing with the worshipped; themselves, after the manner of their images, to be left dead corpses without the breath of life."

MACARIUS, A. D. 350.*

It is impossible for any one to read, in a right frame of mind, the remains of this truly spiritually minded Christian, without, under God's grace, making progress in the Christian state. We must always, in studying the works of past ages with a view to their application to our own life and conduct, take into account the different views on matters of faith and practice which circumstances may have forced on the writers. But we find in Macarius a man bent on rightly dividing the word of truth, and on building up the true Christian character towards perfection in those who seek for his help and guidance,—a perfection to which, as he says, the holiest saint cannot attain on earth, but which the life of faith and holiness and charity on earth will prepare him to receive as the gift of God in heaven. On the subject before us, we find Macarius, like others whom we have already examined, speaking repeatedly of the image, and picture, and similitude of God existing on earth. It is, however, no earthly or material image of which he speaks, but either the Divine Word, God manifest in the flesh, or the image of God in the soul of man,—the image in which man was, as to his spirit, created; which he lost when by transgression he fell, and to restore him to which, He who was from eternity the express image of His Father's person, left the glory of heaven, and came down on earth to die. Ma-

* Leipsic, 1714.

carius speaks of the efficacy of the cross ; yet it is not to fix the eyes of Christians upon the material cross, but to direct our faith to the One Mediator, who shed His blood on the tree. We have space only for two or three extracts :—

“ Every soul made by diligence and faith worthy thenceforth entirely to put on Christ according to the power and fulness of grace, and made one with the heavenly light of the incorruptible image, is even now instructed in the knowledge of all the heavenly mysteries as they exist ; but in the great day of the resurrection, its body, also, being glorified with the same heavenly image of His glory, and being, according to what is written, caught up by the Spirit into the heavens, and deemed worthy to be made like to the form of His glorious body, shall receive the eternal kingdom without change, having Christ as his fellow-heir.”*

..... “ The heavenly image, Jesus Christ, mystically enlightens the soul, and reigns in the souls of the saints ; and Christ, hidden from the eyes of men, is truly seen only by the eyes of the soul till the day of the resurrection.”†

“ The rod of Moses bore two similitudes : the foe it met as a serpent, biting and destroying ; but to the Israelites it was a staff on which they rested. Thus, also, the true tree of the cross, which is Christ, is death to the enemy, the spirits of wickedness ; but of our souls it is the staff, and the safe abiding-place, and the life on which they rest. For what took place before were types and shadows of these realities ; for the ancient service was a shadow and image of the present service ; and circumcision, and the tabernacle, and the ark, and the urn, and the manna, and the priesthood,

* *De Libertate Mentis*, cap. xxiv.

† *Homil. ii. cap. v.*

and the incense, and the washings, and, in one word, all things which took place in Israel and in the law of Moses or in the prophets, were for the sake of this soul, which was made after the likeness of God, and which fell under the yoke of bondage and the kingdom of bitter darkness. For with this soul God wished to have communion; and this He prepared for Himself to be the bride of the King; and this He purifies from pollution, and, washing it from its own blackness and baseness, makes it shine, and restores it from death to life, and cures it from its bruised state, and secures it peace from its enemies; for though a creature, it was made fit to become the bride of the King's Son." *

The present Church of Rome makes the Virgin Mary to be the spouse of God and queen of heaven, and bids us worship images of the Virgin and of God and of His ever-blessed Son; Macarius makes Christ the image of God; and represents the human soul, when by grace made His image, to be the celestial bride.

ST. EPIPHANIUS, A. D. 370. †

It has been elsewhere shewn how direct and irrefutable a testimony this celebrated man bears against the worship of the Virgin Mary; how utterly unknown to him was the legend of her immaculate conception in her mother's womb, her assumption, and her intercession and present power with God.‡ No less direct is the evidence which he bears against not the worship only, but the use of images in the Church. So utterly inconsistent with that use and worship indeed is the testimony borne by him, in his letter to John Bishop of

* Homil. xlvi. cap. xvi. † Cologne, 1682.

‡ See "Romish Worship of the Virgin," p. 190.

Jerusalem,* that, after recording many attempts to explain away its force, which were utterly ineffectual, Bellarmin declares it to be a forgery—not pronouncing against the genuineness of the whole letter, but only against this passage, as an interpolation.† The original Greek is not extant, and we find the letter only in a translation by St. Jerome. There seems, however, to be no copy of the letter without this passage; and, instead of carrying with it any mark of its having been unnaturally inserted, it corresponds altogether with the drift and object of the whole letter, which was to convince his correspondent that he was prejudiced against him, and had condemned him without reason. That it was not cited by the second Council of Nice, in order to be answered, forms no ground for objection to it; for whatever told against them, the members of that council either suppressed, or by a summary vote dismissed as spurious. The former council at Constantinople had cited a strong passage from Epiphanius, urging his fellow-Christians not on any account to admit images into the Church. And the deacon, who answers from a prepared document all the arguments of the previous council, reads a comment on that quotation denying its genuineness, and declaring that there were found only two or three copies, besides some recently edited. The former council had asserted that any one, who would take the pains, could easily find many testimonies of Epiphanius against the innovation; but the deacon declares them all to be forgeries, invented and circulated by the opponents of image-worship. There was no one present to contradict him, all being on one side; not a bishop being allowed to take his seat till he had purged himself of all suspicion

* Vol. ii. p. 317.

† Vol. ii. lib. ii. cap. ix.

of hostility to images. But on this we need not dwell. Whether this letter to John Bishop of Jerusalem was cited or not at the former council at Constantinople, we cannot tell; for we find only just so much quoted as the deacon rehearsed and answered: certainly at the second Nicene Council it is not referred to at all by name; but it may be among those many denunciations of Epiphanius against image-worship which the former council declared to be in existence.

The passage, however, of Epiphanius, as we find it in Jerome, who translated it, is as follows. Having requested his correspondent not to indulge in complaints against him, and having prayed that the God of peace would of His clemency grant that Satan might be trodden under foot by Christians, and that the bond of charity and peace might not be broken, nor the preaching of the true faith impeded, he proceeds:—

“ Moreover, I have heard that some complain against me, because when we were going together to the holy place called Bethel, and I had come to a village called Anablatha, and had there, in passing by, seen a light burning, and inquired what the place was, and had learned that it was a church, and had gone in for the purpose of praying, I found there a veil, or curtain, hanging at the doors of the church, coloured and painted, and having the image as if of Christ, or some saint. I have no clear recollection whose image it was. When, therefore, I had seen this, the image of a man hung in the church, contrary to the authority of the Scriptures, I tore it, and, moreover, advised the keepers of the same place to wrap the corpse of a poor man in it, and bury it. And they murmuring against this, said ‘ If he determined to rend it, it was right that he should give us another

curtain, and change it.' As soon as I heard this, I promised to give another, and to send it immediately. There intervened, however, some little delay, while I was endeavouring to send the best curtain instead of it; for I thought I ought to send one from Cyprus. I have now sent what I could find, and I request you will direct the presbyters of the same place to receive from the bearer the curtain which we have sent; and afterwards to teach that in the Church of Christ curtains of that sort, which are contrary to our religion, are not to be hung up; for it becomes your dignity to feel such anxiety as would remove all scandal unworthy of Christ, and of the people entrusted to you. Against Palladius, also, the Galatian, who was once dear to us, but now is in need of God's mercy, be on your guard, (because he preaches and teaches the heresy of Origen,) that he may not perchance seduce into his error any of the people entrusted to you. I trust you may fare well in the Lord." *

There is one remarkable circumstance, which would seem to carry with it the evidence of an undesigned coincidence. In this letter Epiphanius says, what he did was at the first objected to, and afterwards made a subject of complaint against him: now this remarkably coincides with the sentiment of a letter ascribed to him as written to the Emperor Theodosius, and cited by the deacon in the second Nicene Council, but scornfully rejected as spurious:†—

" In the close of the letter we find a sentence to this effect, ' Though I have often spoken with my fellow-ministers that images should be removed, I was not received by them, nor would they listen to me in the least.' " The deacon proceeds to say, " Let us see

* Jerom., epist. li. vol. i. p. 251.

† Act vi.

who were his fellow-ministers ! They were Basil, and Gregory of Nazianzum, and Gregory of Nyssa, and Chrysostom, and Ambrose, and Amphilochius, and Cyril of Jerusalem. If these men, then, would not endure the removal of images, why should not we preserve them ?" The deacon forgot, that, if that letter came from Epiphanius, he was speaking, not of those great lights of the Church, but of innovators, who seemed then to be multiplying fast around. For, towards the end of the fourth century, it is evident that the practice of bringing images and paintings into churches was gaining ground in Christendom ; yet certainly not for two centuries afterwards were they set up to be worshipped. But, unhappily, the greater evil follows almost inevitably the footsteps of the less. Habitual reverence of the images of those whom we reverence leads to their worship and invocation. What the sentiments of those great Lights were, it remains for us to examine.

ST. BASIL, A. D. 370.*

When we bear in mind the weight which has always been attached to the testimony of Basil the Great, Bishop of Cæsarea, we cannot wonder at the anxiety which has generally manifested itself in the supporters of controverted doctrines to cite his evidence in their own favour. But we do wonder that Romanist bishops, and popes, and canonized saints should let that anxiety induce them, with so little caution and care, to quote, as conveying his testimony, passages which he never wrote ; and distorting passages, which, though found word for word in his genuine remains, yet in their true meaning have not the slightest bearing on the point to establish which they have been cited. It

is, indeed, lamentable to see with what pertinacity passages indisputably spurious, continue to be summoned to bear St. Basil's testimony in support of the use and worship of images; and expressions appealed to as conveying his sentiments on that subject, when he evidently had his thoughts on another. The example was set at the second Council of Nice by two Popes of Rome—by Adrian in his letter to Constantine and his mother Irene, and by Gregory in a letter quoted in the fourth act of that council as having been written to Germanus, former Patriarch of Constantinople.

The passage quoted as from Basil by Pope Adrian carries its own condemnation on its forehead. Bellarmin, who, as we have seen, is by no means backward or scrupulous in quoting as genuine what he elsewhere pronounces spurious, does not venture to take upon himself the responsibility here: the passage is too strong for him to omit; and yet he quotes it only at second-hand, as a testimony appealed to by Pope Adrian. Others have not been so guarded; and Bishop Jewel's antagonist, Harding, introduces the passage in these words:—"Of all the Fathers, none hath a plainer testimony, both for the use and also for the worshipping of images, than Basil, whose authority for learning, wisdom, and holiness of life, besides antiquity, is so weighty in the judgment of all men, that all our new masters, laid in a balance against him, shall be found lighter than any feather. Touching this matter, making a confession of his faith in an epistle, inveighing against Julian the renegade, he saith thus." *

Adrian's words are these: †—"In the letter, also,

* Bp. Jewel, art. xviii.

† Conc. Nic. ii. act ii. This testimony is also cited in the fourth act of the same council.

of the holy Basil to Julian the transgressor, it is stated, ‘As we have inherited from God our blameless Christian faith, I confess and follow and believe in one God Almighty, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost ; one God, these three, I worship and glorify. I acknowledge also the dispensation of the Son Incarnate. Then also I confess the Holy Mary Theotocos, who according to the flesh brought Him forth. I receive also the holy Apostles, and prophets, and martyrs (those who implore God), because, through their intercession, the gracious God becomes merciful to me, and gives me remission of sins : wherefore also I openly honour and worship the representations of their images ; for this was delivered down to us from the holy Apostles, and must not be forbidden ; and in all our churches we raise representations of them.’*

We scarcely need add, that this is no where found in any of the works in existence, whether spurious or genuine, attributed to St. Basil ; even Cardinal Bellarmin, and Coccius, and others, referring us solely to this epistle of Pope Adrian. How totally inconsistent with St. Basil’s sentiments is the passage confessing the Virgin Mary, and professing that the writer looks to the mediation of her and other saints for God’s mercy on his soul, has been elsewhere shewn.

We must next examine a passage which we find alleged (in a letter read in the second Nicene Council, purporting to be the epistle of Pope Gregory to Germanus) as a proof, that, in St. Basil’s mind, the worship paid to the image of a saint passed on to the saint. The words are the words of Basil ; but they have no more to do with the worship paid to the image of a saint by Christians, than they have with the worship of

* The Romish Worship of the Virgin, p. 203.

Diana by the Ephesians, or of Juggernaut by the Hindoos. The passage does not, in the most remote degree, refer to the subject of our present inquiry; and does not intimate, even by the slightest shadow, that Basil was aware of any religious honour being paid in his time to the images of saints, or of the Virgin, or of our blessed Saviour. The words of Gregory's letter are these:—

“ In the next place, [besides the cross, you must have] the holy image of the queen of all, who is in truth the holy mother of God, whose countenance the rich of the people supplicate. For truly, as it appears to the Fathers, holy is she who makes you a return for being thus so piously honoured by you; since, according to the great Basil, the honour of the image passes on to the original.”*

If, from this application of Basil's words to prove that the honour paid to the image of the Virgin she acknowledged as paid to herself, and therefore made a return for it, we look to the passage in Basil where these words occur, we shall immediately see how unjustifiable a distortion of that Father's meaning is here made to suit the purpose of the writer. Basil is answering the objection made against our worshipping Christ as God, that, by so doing, we are making two Gods. He protests against such a view, and illustrates it by the instance of the honour paid to a king, and to the image of that king. Of the aptness or correctness of the illustration we need form no judgment with reference to the point before us. History tells us that emperors and kings required their subjects to pay respect to their statues or pictures; and Basil illustrates his Christian doctrine by a reference to that practice. We need not quote more than the following extract,

* Conc. Nic. ii. act iv.

though, for the thorough understanding of his argument, which does not bear on ours, more must be read :—

“ How, then, if they are one and one, [the Father and the Son,] are they not two Gods ? ” “ Because even the image of the king is called the king, and they are not called two kings ; for neither is the sovereignty divided [between them], nor the glory [ascribed] cleft asunder : for as the sovereignty over us is one, and the authority one, so also is our ascription of glory [in the case of the king and his image] one and not many ; because the honour paid to the image passes through to him whom it represents.” *

Here we have an illustration drawn from the honour paid to the image of an earthly sovereign ; and this is distorted to prove that the worship paid to images by Christians (of which, as far as it appears, he never had even heard, at all events had never approved) was sanctioned by the writer, on the ground that it was paid to the original.

The only other passage which seems to have been quoted from this Father in support of image-worship is one appealed to by Bellarmin, Coccius, and others, to prove, that, at a date so early as Basil, pictures were admitted into the Christian churches. Supposing for a moment that it proved so much, what a wide gulf lies between the admission of an historical painting within the walls of a church, and the setting up of the image, (whether statue or picture,) to be religiously honoured and worshipped ! The passage is at the close of a very short rhapsody on the sufferings and inflexible endurance of the martyr Barlaam. Having exhausted his powers of description by words, the orator, adding a climax to the whole, refers his audience to the more

* Lib. de Spiritu Sanc., cap. xviii.

affecting sense of sight, and bids them see in the picture representing the martyrdom what his eloquence could not adequately describe. Bellarmin's conclusion, that the picture must have been somewhere in the church in which Basil spoke, is a perfectly gratuitous assumption, finding not the very slightest countenance in the orator's apostrophe to the painters. On the contrary, his apostrophe to the painters is throughout a sort of graceful challenge, that they would afterwards surpass, by the arts of colouring, his description by eloquence of the martyr's sufferings :—

“ But why by childish babblings do I lower the victor? We therefore yield the song on this man to more magnificent tongues: let us summon the louder trumpets of masters to it. Rise up, I pray you, O ye painters-to-the-life of successful struggles! By your arts magnify the mutilated picture. By the colours of your skill brighten up the crowned champion, too darkly painted by me. Let me retire vanquished by your painting of the valorous deeds of the martyr. May I rejoice in being to-day conquered by such superior power of yours! May I see the struggle of the hand with the fire more accurately painted by you. May I see the wrestler more brightly painted in your picture. Let the devils wail; struck down even now through you by the martyr's success. Let the burned and conquering hand be again shewn to them: and on the painting let the presider of the contest, Christ, be described; to whom be glory for ever and ever! Amen.”*

This passage is confidently appealed to by Cardinal Bellarmin and others, nay, it is cited in the catechism of the Council of Trent, in proof that in St. Basil's time images of saints were admitted into the Christian

* Hom. xvii. in Barlaam Martyrem.

Church. Not one word falls from the orator's lips as to the place where the picture, were it ever to be painted, would be put; certainly no allusion is made to the church as its proper place.

But while the defenders of image-worship, from the second Nicene Council to the present day, have left no expedient untried, to put forth Basil as a witness in their favour, yet all in vain, there are many passages which forcibly assure us, that, had Basil approved of that worship, or even known of its existence among Christians, he must have alluded to it. He speaks of the image of God, but it is the Lord Christ primarily, and then, in an inferior sense, the soul of man;* he speaks of the images of the saints, but it is their spiritual and moral exemplar and likeness, not the visible and material statue or picture of their earthly frame. The manner, too, in which either Basil, or one who about his time wrote the work to which we shall presently refer, speaks with joy and thankfulness of the desuetude into which image-making had fallen, and of the more true estimate which had been then formed of material representations of invisible objects, since the light of the Gospel had risen on the earth, leads us directly to the conclusion, that, had the images of saints or of our blessed Lord been substituted for the idols of heathen times, the writer must have alluded to it, as he does allude to the doctrines of the cross, as having banished the ancient superstitions, and taken their place. A very few examples on these points will suffice, though several might be cited to the same purport.

In his refutation of the errors of Eunomius, arguing against a blasphemy which made him shudder, (namely,

* See Epist. xxxviii. sect. viii.

that there was no comparison or fellowship between the Father and the Son,) Basil says, “ If this be so, how said He to Philip, ‘ Have I been so long with you, and hast thou not known me, Philip ? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.’ For how could the Son shew in Himself Him who admitted of no comparison, and had no fellowship with Him ? What is unknown is not understood through that which is unlike and of another kind ; but, by the nature of things, the like is made known by its like. Thus, in a seal, the form of him who set the seal [with his own likeness engraven on it] is perceived ; and by an image the knowledge of the original is conveyed, when, that is, we compare the identity in each. So that by this one blasphemy all the announcements made by the Holy Spirit to the glory of the Only-Begotten are set at nought : whereas the Gospel teaches us ‘ Him hath God the Father sealed ;’ and the Apostle, ‘ Who is the image of the invisible God ;’ not a lifeless image, nor one made with hands, nor the work of art and skill, but a living image, or rather self-existing-life, not in the likeness of a form, but ever preserving in its very essence the unchangeable likeness.”*

A work from ancient time ascribed to Basil the Great, now indeed pronounced not to be his, but nevertheless to have been written either in the fourth, or early in the fifth century, is still published in the appendix of the Benedictine edition. It is scarcely possible to conceive, that, had the writer known of the admission of images into Christian churches, and of any religious worship paid to them, he could have written as follows, without any reference to the practice. In a comment on the second chapter of Isaiah, speaking on the words

* 1 Eunom. lib. i. cap. xvii. and xviii.

“Their land also is full of the abomination of the works of their hands,” the writer says, “Since it is usual for the Scriptures, in a peculiar manner, to call idols abominations, all the evil phantasies impressed upon the mind, as by the art of painting, are abominations filling the land, that is, the ample space of the rational mind. ‘And they worshipped what their fingers had made.!’ Oh! surpassing madness, to regard what was made by a man’s self as a God, and not to see the absurdity of the thing. If it is the matter you admire, why in sooth do you not worship unformed brass or stone? But if it is on account of the skill, worship your own hands that invested it with its form, or the instrument by which you prepared it. How great folly not to catch an idea of the reality, through the long space of time while the statue was being chiselled or molten! and this is what is meant by ‘They worshipped what their own fingers made.’ The man must of necessity admit one of two things, either that he had not a God before he formed one himself, or that his former one had grown old, now that he wanted another. But ‘accursed is every man who shall make a graven or molten thing, the work of the hands of the artificer!’”*

Again, with much to the same effect, he says, “After the coming of Christ the regard of the works of man’s hand was thrown away; image-makers were no longer in much esteem; and things which had from ancient time been carefully attended to, no longer met with the same regard, but were cast away in dens and caves and hidden places. What had so long escaped them in the darkness of ignorance, when the light arose they saw,—the wood as wood, the stone as stone; being

* Sect. 82.

no longer deceived by the form which invested those things, but estimating them according to their real nature. From the time the cross was named, idols were put to flight.”*

ST. GREGORY OF NAZIANZUM,† A. D. 380.

No appeal seems to have been made to this celebrated writer, either for his sanction of image-worship, or for evidence that the innovation had appeared in Christendom when he lived. And it may confidently be asserted, that no passage of that tendency can be found in his works. He, like his predecessors or contemporaries, to whom our attention has already been directed, speaks much, and with eloquence and feeling, of the image of God and of Christ; yet it was no visible and material image to be set up in churches and worshipped; it was the pure image of God in Christ, and of Christ in the soul of a believing, and loving, and obedient Christian. The manner, too, in which he condemns idol-worship, leaves us in no doubt, that, had he countenanced the worship of the images of saints, of the blessed Virgin, and of our Lord, he must have alluded to it. What he urges against idols of wood and stone applies equally to the images of the holiest prototypes. A few short extracts will establish and illustrate these positions.

Having instanced with much fervour of piety the mercies and wonders of Christ’s Incarnation in many other points, Gregory adds—

“ For a while He emptied Himself of His own glory, that I might partake of His fulness. How great the riches of his goodness! how great this mystery towards me! I partook of His image, and did not

* Sect. 96.

† Paris, 1778 and 1840.

preserve it; He partook of my flesh, that He might save His image, and make my flesh immortal.”*

In the beautiful and affecting description of his sister’s happiness, contained in her funeral oration, he says, “Her nobility consists in the preservation of the image, and the likeness of the original, which the word and virtue effect.”†

In his poem, called “The Lamentation,” bewailing his fall from integrity, he says,

“ The image is made void: what word will aid me ?
 The image is made void ; that unpolluted gift of God,
 The image, was insulted ;
 . . . O fountain of
 Evil, gush not forth ! Do not so, vain mind !
 And if it be thou, O tongue ! admit of no stain ;
 And if it be thou, O hand ! admit of nothing base :
 Then may the image remain to me uncorrupt.”‡

In his poem to Nemesius, Gregory, doubtless, is speaking against the worship of idols, as representatives of worthless and immoral personages; but his words apply equally to all images and pictures of unseen objects of worship.

“ Attend to my words. It is not lawful nor seemly for man, the creature of God, the fair and imperishable image of the heavenly Word, intellectual, and understanding intellectual things, whose path is upwards, to bow down to vain images of things in the sea, and earth, and in the air; worthless images of a material which is scattered and dispersed, the sport of thy hand, subject to rust and filth; of which one half is worshipped the other left unrespected. Would that, exalted high on a watch-tower, I could

* Hom. xix. vol. i. p. 535.

† Sect. vi. vol. i. p. 221.

‡ Vol. ii. p. 959, carm. 61.

thunder it out to all on the earth, ‘Ye mortal men, framers of things of nought, how long with falsehoods and day-dreams will ye, deceived and deceivers, in vain wander on the earth, senseless worshippers of idols?’”*

It is curious to remark that, in his introductory address to this Nemesius, he tells him in a strain of compliment, that the prevailing custom would place his statue or his portrait in the city, since, he says, “The representation of worthy chiefs is a pride to the citizens even in after times.” But of the image of saint, or Virgin, or of our Lord, in the church, he says not a word. He speaks of the power of the cross of Christ; but he gives no intimation that in his time crosses of wood and stone were set up, to be worshipped and adored.

GREGORY OF NYSSA, A. D. 390.†

It is impossible to read the works of this Christian bishop, brother of Gregory of Nazianzum, without seeing that he was a man of great talent and exalted piety; and it is equally impossible not to see, that if (what is very doubtful) the homilies ascribed to him came from his tongue or pen, superstitious innovations were in his time making formidable inroads upon the pureness and integrity of Christian faith and worship. On the subject, however, before us, few have ventured to appeal to Gregory of Nyssa for his testimony in favour of image-worship. Still one reference‡ has been made, deserving, as concerns our argument, patient and serious consideration. In the catechism of the Council of Trent this Gregory’s eulogy on the martyr Theodorus is cited, among other testimonies, to justify the use and worship of images in the Church of Christ.

* P. 1072. † Paris, 1638. ‡ Vol. iii. p. 579. .

Now, were it not for a knowledge of the blindness which the maintenance of a bad cause generally throws on the eyes of its advocates, we should have supposed, that, rather than appeal to that eulogy in defence of the worship of images, the Tridentine catechism would have suggested arguments to neutralise the evidence incidentally and undesignedly, but really and substantially, borne by this very oration against the worship of images. How does the case stand? The orator tells his audience, that, whereas generally persons turn away in disgust from a corpse lying in a sepulchre, here, in the building where the body of Theodorus lay, they were delighted with the spectacle. The house, like a house of God, was so adorned by the skill of the architect, the lapidary, and the painter, that even to its very floor it must call forth the admiration of those who visited it. Gregory does, indeed, speak of a painting which represents the sufferings of the martyr, and also a representation of our Saviour as presiding over His martyr's struggles; and this would prove, that, at whatever time the oration was delivered, pictures were then allowed to hang on the walls of the church. But when we come to the question of the worship of images, a child may see at a glance, that this passage might just as well have been cited by a priest of the ancient Egyptian mythology, to prove that the Christians at that time worshipped the different animals, with the figures of which the orator tells us the place was adorned.

The passage is this: having spoken of a man who had passed by a dead body in a sepulchre with disgust, he says, "But coming to such a place as this, where our assembly is to-day, where are the monument and the sacred remains of a just man, in the first place his mind is influenced by the magnificence of what is seen, when he

beholds a house as a temple of God, splendidly adorned by the extent of the building, and the beauty of the additional ornaments; where both the carver has shaped the wood into the appearances of animals, and the lapidary has polished his slabs to the smoothness of silver; and the painter has drawn the flowers of his art, describing in a picture the brave deeds of the martyr, his resistances, his tortures, the savage forms of the tyrants, the reproaches, that fiery furnace, the most happy end of the wrestler, the delineation of the human form of Christ, the presider at the contests; where the artist, by his skill in colouring, representing all, even as in a book interpreting different languages, has clearly shewn to us the struggles of the martyr, and has beautified the church as a fair meadow; (for a picture silent on a wall knows how to speak, and to be of greatest benefit;) and where the compositor too of the pebbles has made the pavement, which is trodden upon, like a history."

Bellarmin also quotes this passage word for word; but, so far from its implying that the picture either of our blessed Saviour, or of His martyr, was an object of religious veneration, it ranks them precisely on the same footing, as works of art and objects of admiration, with the figures of animals, the burning furnace, the cruel tyrants, and the tessellated pavement.

But while Gregory of Nyssa affords no countenance to those who pay religious veneration or worship to images, his works contain many passages which have a directly opposite tendency. The only image of God to be worshipped, according to him, is Christ our Lord; and the only image of the object of our worship which he suggests to us to form, is the likeness of God in our own soul and heart. The manner in which

he speaks of these things is truly edifying. For example, on the duty of our forming, and cultivating, and perfecting the image of God in our soul, he says,

“Thus [as St. Paul did] the sons of God must have their conversation. For after grace we are called His children: for which reason it well becomes us to look accurately to the characteristics of our Parent; that, forming and fashioning ourselves after the likeness of our Father, we may prove to be the genuine sons of Him who has called us to adoption through grace. For it is a wretched accusation for a man to be called spurious and supposititious, falsifying by his deeds the nobleness of his father.”*

Speaking of Christ being the image of the Father, Gregory says,

“He who possesses altogether what is the Father’s, and is viewed in all the glory of his Father, as existing in the endless existence of the Father, hath no end of life: so, too, existing in the Father who had no beginning, He hath no beginning of days, as saith the Apostle. But He is both of the Father, and is viewed in the eternity of the Father; and chiefly in this way is He viewed throughout as the entirely unchangeable image of Him of whom he is the image.”†

In the following passages the reader will observe especially two things: first, that, by whatever name religious honour may be called, “*worship*,” “*divine service*,” “*veneration*,” “*devotion*,” or “*sacrifice*,”‡ that religious honour Gregory declares to be lawfully paid only to the one supreme God, and to no other being, however exalted. Instead of employing those nicely

* In *Baptismum Christi*, vol. iii. p. 379.

† *Cont. Eunom.*, *Orat. vii. vol. ii.* p. 623.

‡ προσκυνεῖν — εἶδωλον σέβεται — λατρεία — σέβασμα — θεραπεύειν — θύειν.

drawn and refined and subtle distinctions, which have been invented to give some colour to the offering of secondary and relative worship to images, he uses all these words indiscriminately, as though he knew no practical difference between them. The second remarkable fact established here is, not, as the Council of Trent and the advocates of image-worship teach us to believe, that the idolaters of old regarded the statue of wood or stone as the god, and did not look to any invisible object represented by it, (on which an attempt is made to ground the distinction between idolatry and image-worship,) not so, but that the invisible object of unlawful religious worship is called expressly an idol. In remonstrating with those misbelievers who, though they would pay religious honour to the Son of God, yet denied His eternal power and Godhead, Gregory says, they were worshipping an idol, and giving the name of Christ to an idol, in a case where no idea of a material image or a visible idol could have any place.

Having quoted the Psalmist's words, "There shall be no new god in Thee, neither shalt thou worship another god," Gregory says, "Let us take this as our rule and index for a knowledge of the object of worship, so as to be persuaded that that is the true God, which is neither new nor another. Since, then, we have been taught that the Only-Begotten is God, we believe that He is neither new nor another. . . . So that he who severs the Son from the nature of the Father, either absolutely and altogether renounces His worship, lest he should be worshipping another god; or he reverences an idol, establishing as the object of his worship a creature and not God, adding the name of Christ to an idol." "When we hear these sentiments, and such as these, from inspired men, how can

we do otherwise than leave, for idolaters to worship, that which is not from eternity, but is new and estranged from the true divinity? For that which now is, but formerly was not, is palpably recent, and not eternal; but to look to any recent being Moses calls a service to devils, saying, ‘They sacrificed to devils and not to God. Gods, whom their fathers knew not, came in, new and recent.’ If, then, what is recent is held in religious veneration, it is the service of devils, and is alienated from the true Divinity. But that which is now, yet was not always, is recent, and not eternal. Of necessity, therefore, we, who look to that which is, must reckon among the worshippers of idols those who look under the same view to that which is not and that which is, and who say that once it was not.” Again, repeating his condemnation of those who, though they worship Christ, yet hold that there was a time when He was not, Gregory declares it to be nothing else than “a transgression of the Christian faith, and a turning to idolatry.”*

EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN, A. D. 380.

Here we should have gladly inserted the result of our examination into the remains of Ephraim of Edessa; but until his works are more faithfully edited than they have hitherto been, the labour of searching through them would not only be thrown away, but would mislead us. “Page after page,” we are told, “prove him to have believed as the Church of Rome believes, as to the worship of the Virgin Mary;”† and when we examine those pages, we find them, page after page, most palpably spurious. On the subject how-

* Cont. Eunom., Orat. ii. vol. ii. p. 451; and Orat. vii. vol. ii. p. 622.

† See Romish Worship of the Virgin, p. 224.

ever, of image-worship we are not aware that any appeal has ever been made by its advocates to his writings.

ST. AMBROSE, A. D. 397.*

One of the most painful and perplexing circumstances, inseparable from a careful examination of the remains of primitive Christian antiquity, is the uncertainty whether, when we are quoting a passage, either the passage or the work came from the person to whom it has been ascribed. This is in a very lamentable degree the case with the works usually attributed to St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, whose praise has prevailed in the Church generally from his days to our own. The Benedictines have done much, in their edition, towards the exclusion of the spurious works usually circulated as his; but, consistently with a grateful acknowledgment of what they have done, it is possible to entertain serious doubts, whether they have not retained some works which ought to be rejected, and given their judgment against others which a further investigation would pronounce genuine.

On the subject of our present inquiry, while not a single word can be found that suggests the idea that the Church of Christ, in the age of Ambrose, admitted images of saints, of the blessed Virgin, or of our divine Saviour, as objects of religious worship, an appeal has been made by the supporters of image-worship to some passages which we must examine.

In his treatise on the mystery of the Incarnation of our Lord, Ambrose is solving the objection made to the doctrine, that the wisdom, in which Christ is said in His youthful days to have increased, was human wis-

* Venice, 1781.

dom, in contradistinction to the divine wisdom, which was His own as God. The objection to this view was that, by ascribing a twofold wisdom to Him, we divided Christ. To this Ambrose replies—

“ What, then, when we adore His divinity, and His flesh, do we divide Christ? What, when in Him we venerate the image of God and the cross, do we divide Him? The Apostle certainly, who says of Him,* ‘ For though He was crucified through our weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God,’ says himself that Christ is not divided. Well, then, when we say that he assumed a rational soul, capable of exercising an understanding, do we divide him?”†

This is cited, as Cardinal Bellarmin tells us,‡ to prove that St. Ambrose worshipped the cross with the same adoration with which he worshipped Christ Himself. The passage palpably shews that he is here speaking, not of the cross on which Christ died, nor of any material cross, but of the human nature of Christ, in which He suffered. And were this not evident from the plain sense of the passage, his words in another part would put it beyond doubt.

This is not the place for inquiring into the reality of the tradition as to Queen Helena’s having miraculously discovered the very cross on which our Lord suffered. In his oration on the death of Theodosius Ambrose refers to it, though his account materially differs from that, which has been generally received, especially when he describes the Queen as having distinguished the cross of Christ from the other two by the title. On this point he says,

“ She therefore found the title; she adored the King—not in truth the wood, for this is a heathen error,

* 2 Cor. xiii. 4. † De Incarn. Dom. cap. vii. ‡ Lib. ii. cap. xx.

and the vanity of the ungodly; but she adored Him who hung on the wood, and who was designated by the title."

This passage will supply a key to the true meaning of the following, which has also been cited for the same purpose as the preceding. Having told us that she caused one of the nails to be converted into a curb, and of the other made an ornament for the royal diadem, Ambrose says, "Helen did wisely in placing the cross on the head of kings, that the cross of Christ might in kings be adored."*

It must not be forgotten that many persons consider this oration to be spurious; and certainly it seems in several points to sink far below the character of the celebrated man to whom it is ascribed.

Another passage, from his Commentary on the 119th Psalm, has been quoted, to shew that the honour paid to an image passes on from the image to the prototype: but the entire passage, in its true meaning, tells directly and forcibly against a Christian's adoring an image of our Saviour, and then defending it on the plea, that in that image he is adoring Christ; for this is the very plea for using which in defence of their idol-worship Ambrose condemns the heathen.† The true intent and bearing of the writer is so evident, that we wonder how any one could distort it to countenance any thing so inconsistent with it as is image-worship. Ambrose tells us that a righteous and poor man is the image of God, and cautions us against behaving towards him with injustice, cruelty, reproach, or neglect; for by so doing we shall be guilty of the same wrongs towards God, according to whose likeness he is formed:—

..... "So that if we see a poor man, let us in the

* De Obit. Theodos. cap. xlvi. and xlviii. † In Psalm cxviii. cap. xxv.

poor man honour Him after whose image he is made, for of him He says, ‘ Ye have given Me meat, because what ye have given to one of these ye have given to Me.’ For he who crowns the image of an emperor, verily honours him whose image he crowns; and he who insults the statue of an emperor, seems to do the injury to the emperor whose statue he has used ignorantly. The heathen adore the wood because they think it the image of God; but the image of the invisible God is not in that which is seen, but in that surely which is not seen. You see, then, that we are walking among many images of Christ; let us take heed lest we appear to take off from his image the crown which Christ has placed on each. Let us take heed not to take away from them to whom we ought to add. But, what is worse, so far from honouring the poor, we dishonour, and destroy, and persecute them; and we do not reflect, that, when we think those who are made after the image of God may be injured, it is on the image of God we heap those injuries.”*

We have space for only two or three more references to this light of the Latin Church. He speaks of worshipping the divine spiritual serpent, of which the brazen serpent was the type;† but he speaks not of the people of God as ever having, without guilt, worshipped that type in the wilderness. “ As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up. In the brazen serpent is prefigured my serpent: on that wood my serpent was exalted; the good serpent who pours forth not poison, but remedies from his mouth. That man needs not be

* See much that is most edifying and awakening, to the same effect, in the eleventh chapter of the same discourse.

† In Psalm cxviii., serm. v. cap. xv.

afraid of serpents who has learned to adore this serpent.”

Of “the blessed wood whereby cometh righteousness, and the accursed wood which is made by the hands of man,”* Ambrose says, “The former referred to the cross of the Lord, the latter to the error of the Gentiles who worship blocks of wood. But what is the righteousness of the cross, except that He who ascended that tree, the Lord Jesus Christ, crucified the handwriting of our sins, and cleansed the sin of the whole world by His blood.”†

In his book “On Flying from the World”‡ he has this passage, scarcely, one should think, compatible with his knowledge that the Church then used, and worshipped images :—“Now holy Rachel, that is, the Church, hid the images,§ because the Church knows nothing of hollow opinions and the vain figures of images, but knows the true substance of the Trinity.”

The Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans is one of those treatises which many still think to be the genuine work of St. Ambrose; but which the Benedictine editors have unhesitatingly pronounced to be spurious.|| Still, they regard it as the production of a contemporary of St. Ambrose, and fix its date at the close of the fourth century, considering it probable that Hilary, the Roman deacon, was its author. Whoever was its author, it seems incompatible with any knowledge that images of saints were worshipped in the Christian Church in his day. On the passage,

* He is referring to the apocryphal Book of Wisdom, chap. xiv. ver. 7 and 8. † In Ps. cxviii. serm. viii. cap. xxiii.

‡ *De Fuga Sæculi*, cap. xxvii.

§ The words “vel prudentia” are added in the original.

|| See “Romish Worship of the Virgin”—Evidence of St. Ambrose, p. 253.

“ Professing themselves wise, they became fools,” he thus expatiates on the folly of the heathen in justifying their worship of images on the plea that, through those beings whom the idols represented, they could more easily obtain a favourable hearing with the supreme Deity :—

“ They think themselves wise because they fancy they have investigated the laws of nature; examining the courses of the stars, and the qualities of the elements, but despising the Lord of these. . . . When under a feeling of shame, they habitually make this excuse for neglecting God, that by means of those beings they can approach to God, as men approach a king by his courtiers. Come now! Is any one so foolish and forgetful of his own safety, as to claim for the courtier the honour due to the king? Should any be found attempting such a thing, they would justly be condemned of high treason. And yet the men who transfer the honour of God to a creature, and, leaving the Lord, adore their fellow-servants, do not think themselves guilty. As if there were anything further that could be reserved for God! Men approach a king by his ministers or courtiers, only because the king is a man, and knows not to whom he ought to entrust his government. But to secure God’s favour (from whom nothing is hid, for He knows the deserts of every one) there is need, not of an intercessor, but of a devout mind; for whosoever such an one addresses Him, He will answer him.”*

In an epistle† to Valentinian, Ambrose employs language (we have quoted it in a former part of this work) which shews that the Pagans, (men of learning and eloquence,) in worshipping their idols, maintained

* Vol. ii. p. 34, of Appendix. † Epist., class. i. xviii.

that it was God whom they, through the images, worshipped ; the contrary to which both the Council of Trent and Roman Catholic authors maintain, in proof that the commandments and prohibitions of the Holy Scriptures do not apply to the worship of images in the Christian Church :—

“ Sift, I pray you, and thoroughly try the class of the Gentiles : what they utter is rich and grand, but what they defend is utterly devoid of truth. They speak of God ; they adore an image.”

ST. CHRYSOSTOM AND ST. AUGUSTINE.

We have elsewhere* adverted to the tradition that these two burning and shining lights of the early Christian Church were born into the world in the very same year, A. D. 354 ; though some place the birth of Chrysostom seven years earlier. Chrysostom was called from his labours to the rest which awaits the people of God soon after he had passed the meridian of life ; whereas Augustine was permitted to toil in the Lord’s vineyard till he had passed the age after which the Psalmist bids us look only for labour and sorrow.

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, A. D. 400.†

John, surnamed, from the richness of his eloquence, Chrysostom, or “ the golden-mouthed,” was born at Antioch, in Cœlo-Syria. At the age of twenty-seven he was ordained deacon, and at thirty-two, priest. In his forty-fourth year he succeeded Nectarius, the successor of Gregory of Nazianzum, as Bishop of Constantinople. From this station he was deposed, and he died in exile about the year 407.

* Romish Worship of the Virgin, p. 255.

† Paris, 1718.

We have already observed on the great difficulty of separating the genuine works of ancient Christian writers from spurious productions, some of very much later origin, ascribed to them. The Benedictine editors, who have done much towards clearing the field from the weeds, (though they have left much yet further to be done,) tell us that innumerable treatises have been imposed upon the world as Chrysostom's by the vanity of petty authors and the fraud of booksellers; they might have added another most prolific cause of the evil, a determination to uphold and propagate theories and practices in religion by the authority of great names, with little care whether the testimony be spurious or genuine. On the subject of our present inquiry the only testimony attempted to be adduced from St. Chrysostom is drawn from a work beyond all controversy spurious. The works of Chrysostom, genuine and spurious, even after the rejection of many by the Benedictines, together with the Latin translation, notes, indexes, and dissertations, fill no less than thirteen folio volumes. Among his writings are found subjects of every class and under every variety of circumstance; some of his discussions being carried on with calm reflexion and logical accuracy; while in other works he gives full rein to the fervour of his imagination, and pours forth his thoughts with most glowing eloquence. And yet in all these diversified labours not one passage can be found to intimate, that he knew of any use of images in the Christian Church as objects of religious reverence and worship, external or mental.

The advocates for image-worship have not scrupled to quote as St. Chrysostom's the following words, purporting to be a rubric in his Liturgy: "The priest bows his head to the image of Christ."

There is, however, no doubt at all that the Liturgy which used to be circulated in the name of St. Chrysostom was the production of a much more recent age.* We have seen, too, with what eagerness any expression of his was cited in defence of image-worship by the second Council of Nice; though the testimony alleged went no further than to shew, that the friends and countrymen of a good Christian had his portrait hung up in their houses, and engraven on their seals. We may be sure, that, had such a work as the Liturgy referred to been in existence even towards the end of the eighth century, it would have settled the controversy.

We are referred to a passage in his comment on the Epistle to the Ephesians,† in proof that in his time statues and images were admitted into Christian churches. The passage contains a most graphic picture of a rich man's house on fire, by which Chrysostom powerfully illustrates the spiritual calamities which had befallen the Church of Christ; comparing some of its members to the statues and images which adorned the house before the conflagration; but of any the most distant allusion to material images in Chris-

* In the copy printed by the Benedictine editors, the priest and deacons are to make obeisance before the images both of our Saviour and of the Virgin Mary. In the Venice copy the priest is directed to worship those images with a prayer, "We worship thy most pure image, O good Lord," &c. But both Goar and all others represent the diversities in the several copies to be so many and great, as to make it a hopeless task to attempt to determine which is the earliest and best; or, rather, as the Benedictine editors state, there are so many passages which have on their very face the marks of a much more recent age, that we cannot look in them for the views of Chrysostom. Vol. xii. p. 776.

† Hom. x. cap. iv. vol. xi. p. 77.

tian churches there is not a trace. The reader will not regret, though for the argument it may be superfluous, to be furnished with a specimen of St. Chrysostom's style and manner; at the same time, he will see how the supporters of an unsound cause will catch at anything in their eagerness to connect the names of great men with it. Even the Benedictine editors, in their index, and in the margin of the page, point to this passage with the words "Images in Churches."

"You have often been present at the burning of great houses; you have seen how the smoke rises up to heaven; no one going near to extinguish the mischief, but every one looking to his own; and with perfect freedom the fire devours every thing. Often the whole city stands around; but they stand round as spectators of the evil, not to aid and assist; and you may see all standing round doing nothing, but stretching out each his hand, and shewing to one who has just come up either the flame rushing continually through the door, or beams falling, or the entire circuit of the supports torn away, and dashed to the ground. There are also many daring people, reckless of danger, who will approach near the very burning buildings, not to lend a hand to extinguish the evil; but to have a more pleasing view, seeing close at hand objects which often escape those at a distance. If the house should be a spacious and splendid mansion, it seems a lamentable object, and calling for many tears. And, indeed, it is a pitiable sight to witness the capitals of the columns becoming cinders, and many of the columns themselves broken in pieces, some by the work of the fire, others thrown down by the hands of those who built them, to prevent them giving more food for the flames. You may see also statues which

stood most ornamentally, supporting the roof, now that the roof has fallen, exposed to view, and standing with all unsightliness in the open air. Why should we speak of the great wealth stored away within? the robes of gold, and vessels of silver? Moreover, where the master alone used to enter with his wife, where was the store-room of many garments, and spices, and precious stones, now, one funeral pile being raised, bath-men, and scavengers, and vagabonds, and all the rest enter, and see what is left within. And all within is water and fire, and mud and dust, and half-burnt timbers. But why have I drawn out this picture at such length? Not simply from a wish to describe the burning of a house; for what is that to me? but from a desire, as far as I could, to place before your eyes the evils of the Church. For, in good truth, like a conflagration, or lightning flashed from above, has calamity fallen upon the roof of the Church, and has roused and disturbed no one; but while our Father's house is burning, we are sleeping a deep and unconscious sleep. For, whom has not this fire reached? **WHAT STATUES STANDING IN THE CHURCH** has it not reached? For the Church is nothing else than a house built by our souls. But this house is not all of equal value; but of the stones brought together to construct it, some are fair and beautiful; some are less than those, and not so polished, yet much better than others. We may see here, too, many men corresponding with the gold that decorated the roof; we may see, too, other men supplying the place of the ornament derived from statues; and you may see many standing as columns; for he (the apostle) calls men columns* not only from their strength, but because by their beauty they contribute much of

* See Gal. ii. 9.

ornament, having their heads adorned with gold : and you may see a multitude occupying the place of the wide and spacious circuit ; for the great body of the people correspond with the stones that build the walls."

While not a word can be found through the volumes of St. Chrysostom to countenance the worship of images in the Christian Church, passages abound in which his unqualified condemnation of idols and statues, as objects of worship and religious attention, force on us the conclusion, that, had he been even aware of such a practice among his fellow-believers, he must have referred to it, more especially in those cases where he contrasts in words the customs of the heathen and of Christians. Had the difference consisted in what the Church of Rome now tells us that it consists, we should have found that difference asserted in these contrasts drawn by him ; but the difference he speaks of is this, that the heathen made to themselves images to worship, and the Christians had them not.

In one passage he says, that Isaiah, having described the origin of idolatry, represents the pagans as " falling by degrees into the gulf of perdition, worshipping idols." "Then, ridiculing their worship, he [Isaiah] adds, '*the works of their hands.*' For what can be more ridiculous than for a man to be the maker of a god ? And Scripture is used to call images an abomination, and the statue on the temple is called the abomination of desolation. For when he withdrew them from holding in admiration objects of sense, he forbade them to make any similitude ; and he called it an abomination, removing them far from the impiety. For to abominate is excessively to hate as an impure and accursed thing ; and so what is hated and rejected is called in Scripture an abomination ; and every idol

is of this kind. ‘*And they worshipped what their fingers made, and the man bowed down, and the great man brought himself low;*’ for as the worship of God lifts one up on high, so the worship of them [idols] lowers one, and brings one down: indeed, what can be more debased than a man fallen from salvation, and having the God of the universe his enemy, and then worshipping stones? For God raised us to so great honour as to make us higher than the heavens; but the devil is bent on bringing those who obey him down to such worthlessness as to be more insensible than insensible things.”*

On the words of the Psalmist, “*The images of the Gentiles are silver and gold, the works of men’s hands,*”† St. Chrysostom says:—

“After having said at the opening, ‘Our Lord is above all gods,’ he next ridicules the weakness of idol-gods; and forthwith from their nature he frames the charge against them, or rather urges their very name as an accusation; for idol is nothing else than a powerless, worthless thing, the name of excessive weakness; and so, thence, he begins saying, ‘The idols of the heathen are silver and gold;’ first, that it is an idol; secondly, that it is lifeless and dumb matter; thirdly, that, from the very circumstance of their being idols, they derive their littleness, and weakness, and worthlessness, not only from themselves, but also from men: consequently, he adds, ‘The works of men’s hands,’ which forms the strongest charge against those who *worship* them [pay ‡ attention to them], inasmuch

* Comment. on Isaiah, chap. ii. vol. vi. p. 28, &c.

† In. Ps. cxxxiv. s. vii. vol. v. p. 394.

‡ The word here used (*θεραπεύω*) is very general in its application, signifying any attention paid to God or man, or to any lifeless thing, by way either of service, or respect, or care, or remedy, or preservation, &c.

as the very men who are the cause even of their existence, place their hopes of safety in them. Then, again, he raises another point of ridicule against them, saying, ‘They that make them are like unto them.’ Consider what kind of gods are those, the very likeness to whom affords ground for a curse. BUT NOT SO ARE OUR AFFAIRS. For the highest limit of virtue, and what makes us mount to the topmost pinnacle of good, is, according to our capacity, to be made like unto God; but with them, he says, both their worship and their gods are such, that to be like them is the extreme limit of a curse. So that in as much as they are lifeless matter, and in as much as they are made by their worshippers, and in as much as they are idols of deformity, and in as much as they lie without sense, and in as much as he puts the likeness to them on the footing of a curse, by all these arguments is shewn the excess of the error.”

Another passage very similar to this, and in some points almost identified with it, occurs in his comment on the First Epistle to the Corinthians:—

“ Paul, then, having mooted these points and such as these, says, ‘Ye know that ye were Gentiles carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led;’* and since he was speaking to men acquainted with the subject, he does not state all the points with accuracy, not wishing to distress them; but merely reminding them, and bringing all to their reflexion, he speedily withdraws, and hastens to his subject. But what means this, ‘To dumb idols?’ These soothsayers were led and drawn to them. But if they were dumb, how could they use them? and why did the devil carry them as captives and bondsmen to the statues, at the

* Hom. xxix. sect. ii. vol. x. p. 260.

same time making their error plausible? That the stone might not appear to be speechless, he strove to join men on to idols, that the deeds of the men might be ascribed to them. BUT OUR AFFAIRS ARE NOT SUCH."

Throughout we find Chrysostom contrasting heathenism with Christianity, not in as much as the heathen paid a supreme worship to their idols, terminating in those idols, irrespectively of the fable-deities whom they were made to represent, and Christians paid a secondary or relative worship to the images of their saints, the Virgin, or our blessed Saviour, passing on to the prototypes or originals,—not so, but in as much as the heathen had visible and material images in their worship, and Christians had none.

ST. AUGUSTINE, A.D. 425.*

The language of this renowned teacher in Christ's school is so strong and so directly against the worship of images of any kind in the Christian Church, that, on one passage, Cardinal Bellarmin,† after having unsuccessfully tried to explain away his sentiments, says, that when he wrote that work he had recently been converted from paganism, and many Christian observances then offended him, to which afterwards he became fully reconciled. We doubt whether the cardinal (had the fact been so) could have devised a more unanswerable argument against image-worship. The passage well deserves our consideration at the very threshold of our inquiry into the views of Augustine on the point before us. He is urging the want of candour and honesty and common fairness in those heathen

* Paris, 1679.

† Lib. ii. cap. xvi.

who drew arguments against Christianity from the unsatisfactory lives of some who professed it, against whom the Church was continually protesting, and for whose restoration to a sense of duty she was ever labouring. Among the worst of these (and he is enumerating the worst) he reckons the worshippers of pictures. Could he have employed this language, had pictures been then admitted into Christian churches as objects of any sort of religious worship, primary, or subordinate, direct, or relative, *dulia*, *hyperdulia*, or *latria*, or secondary forms of these? But Augustine knew nothing of such puerile distinctions in things concerning the worship of Almighty God, and the salvation of souls through Christ for ever. He says,

“ Do not, I pray you, collect professors of the Christian name, but who neither know nor shew forth the power of their profession. Do not inveigh against crowds of ignorant men, who even in the true religion itself are superstitious, or are so given up to lusts as to forget what they have promised to God. I have known many to be *ADORERS* of tombs and *PICTURES*. I have known many who drink most luxuriously over the dead, and, laying a banquet before the corpses, bury themselves over those who are buried, and put down their surfeiting and drunkenness to the score of religion.”*

In St. Augustine’s works we find so many passages bearing testimony, though diversified, yet essentially the same, against the use of images, (applicable equally to statues and pictures in Christian churches, and to idols by the heathen altars,) that the difficulty is in the selection. We must content ourselves with a few. The following extracts will shew what view he took

* *De Moribus Ecclesiæ*, lib. i. cap. xxxiv. vol. i. p. 714.

of the danger of exhibiting statues and pictures to represent absent objects of religious worship:—

“That idols indeed are devoid of all sense, who can doubt? Nevertheless, when they are fixed in these seats, raised to an honourable height, so that they may be regarded by those who pray and those who sacrifice, although they be senseless and lifeless, yet, by the very resemblance of living members and senses, they so affect weak minds as that they appear to them to live and breathe, especially since this is seconded by the reverence of the multitude by whom so great worship is paid to them.”*

To the following passages we adverted, when we proved that the distinction, which the Council of Trent and other favourers of image-worship have attempted to establish between the worship of images now and the worship of idols in heathen times, is altogether without any foundation in fact, and is a most unjustifiable and groundless assumption. The whole comment, however, is so very full of irrefutable arguments against employing any image or picture in divine worship, that we would gladly have transcribed it into these pages. But we have space only for the few following extracts. On the passage, “Lest the Gentiles say, Where is their God?”† Augustine comments thus:—

“Because we worship an invisible God, who is known by the bodily eyes of none, and only by the pure hearts of a few, as if on that account the heathen might say, ‘Where is their God?’ whereas they can shew their gods to our eyes, he [the Psalmist] first teaches, that the presence of our God is perceived by His works;

*. Epist. cii., Lib. ad Deogratias, sect. xviii. vol. ii. p. 281.

† In Ps. cxiii., serm. ii. vol. iv. p. 1262.

and as if he should say, ‘Let the Gentiles shew their gods, he says, ‘The images of the idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands.’ That is, although we cannot shew our God to your carnal eyes, whom you ought to have understood from His works, yet do not be seduced by your vanities, because you can point with your finger to your gods. Much more creditably would you be without what you can shew, than that, in what is shewn by you to our eyes, the blindness of your heart should be shewn. For what do you shew but silver and gold? Do not apply to it the hands of men, as if out of that metal which the true God made you would wish to make a false god, yea, a false man, whom ye might worship for the true God, and whom should any one adopt for his friend as a true man, he would be mad. For the likeness of the form, and the imitative structure of the limbs, carries, and by a kind of low feeling hurries away, the weak hearts of mortals.”

After much to the same effect, he proceeds:—

“What is more manifest than this? My beloved brethren, what more plain? What child, were he asked, would not answer, that this is certain? ‘The images of the Gentiles have a mouth, and speak not; eyes have they, and see not;’ and the rest which the divine word has interwoven. Why, then, does the Holy Spirit take so much care, in very many places of Scripture, to instil and inculcate this as on persons unacquainted with it, as if it were not well known and open to all? Why, except that the appearance of limbs, which we are accustomed to see on living bodies, and to see in ourselves, (although, as they assert, fabricated for a sort of spectacle and placed on a high stand,) when the object begins to be adored and honoured by the multitude, produces in every one the

basest feeling ; that since in that fictitious thing a man discovers no living motion, he believes there is a hidden divinity ; and, deceived by the figure, and influenced by the authority of institutions, and of the crowds following, he does not think that an image, like to a living body, can be there without some living indweller ? Wherefore the divine books in other places watch against this, in order to prevent people from saying, when their images are ridiculed, I do not worship that visible thing, but the divinity which invisibly dwells there. The very divinities, therefore, in another psalm, the same Scripture thus condemns ‘ The gods of the heathen are demons.’”

“ But those seem to themselves to be of a more purified religion who say, Neither the image nor the demon do I worship ; but I regard the bodily figure as the image of that which I ought to worship”

“ But who adores or PRAYS LOOKING AT AN IMAGE, and does not so feel as to suppose that he is heard by it, and hopes that what he desires will be supplied by it ? Thus, men bound by such superstitions generally turn their back to the sun itself, and pour forth their prayers to the statue which they call the sun ; and while they are struck by the sound of the sea behind, they strike with their sighs the statue of Neptune, which they worship for the sea, as though it had feeling. For the very figure of the bodily members causes, and in a way compels, a living mind, with the senses of the body, to think that the body which it sees most like its own body has feeling, rather than the round sun, and scattered waves, and whatever it sees which is not formed with the same outlines with which those bodies are formed, which it has been accustomed to see alive. Against this feeling, by which human and carnal frailty

may be easily influenced, the Scripture of God dwells on the most familiar points, in order to remind men, and, as it were, to rouse the minds of men, sleeping like their bodies. ‘The images of the heathen are silver and gold.’ But God made silver and gold. ‘The work,’ he says, ‘of men’s hands.’ For they reverence that which they themselves made of silver and gold.”

Augustine then anticipates an objection by which a heathen might retort these arguments on the Christian; and we would ask, Is it conceivable, that, had images then been set up in Christian churches to have due reverence paid to them, whether the images of saints or angels, or of the Virgin, or of Christ, Augustine could have thus answered the anticipated objection ?

“ But we too have very many instruments and vessels of the same kind of material or metal to be used in celebrating the sacraments, which, consecrated to the service, are dedicated as holy to the honour of Him to whom for our salvation that service is offered. And are those instruments or vessels forsooth anything else than the work of men’s hands ? Nevertheless have they, I ask, a mouth and speak not ? have they eyes and see not ? Do we offer any supplication to them on the ground that through them we supplicate God ? The chief cause of the insane impiety is this, that in the feelings of wretched men the figure resembling a living being has more influence to cause itself to be supplicated, than the certainty of its not having life has to convince one that it ought to be despised by a living man. For the images exercise more power to bend down the unhappy soul, by their having a mouth, and eyes, and ears, and hands, and feet, than they do to set the same soul right by their not being able to speak, nor see, nor hear, nor smell, nor handle, nor

walk. Hence it follows, ‘ that all who make them and trust in them are like them.’ Let them, therefore, with their open eyes of sense see, and with their shut and dead minds adore, images which neither see nor live.”

Speaking of those who, at Carthage, relied on a similar plea, Augustine says,

“ But attend to the light in which it is held by the people themselves, not what it is in itself. I and you equally know that it is a stone. . . . We know that it is not a god. Would that they so knew it! but the conscience of those weak persons who do not know this ought not to be hurt. . . . For that they hold it as a divinity, and receive that statue as a divinity, the altar testifies. Let no one tell me, It is not a divinity, it is not a god. I have already said, Would that they so knew this, as all of us know it. But why they have it, and for what thing they have it, and what they do there, the altar bears witness.” *

Would that the advocates for image-worship would act upon these principles of Christian charity!

But while Augustine thus shews that image-worship had no place nor name in the Catholic Church of Christ, he plainly intimates that heretics were beginning to introduce this heathen practice, and so corrupt the purity of Christian worship. In his arguments against Adimantus, a disciple of Manichæus, he tells us that that misbeliever, in calumniating the Scripture, seemed to have no other reason for speaking with reproof of God’s jealousy, than because “ WE ARE PROHIBITED by that jealousy to worship images. He, therefore, wishes himself to appear favourable to images, and for this reason, that he might conciliate even the good-will of pagans to his mad sect.” †

* Ser. lxii. de Verbis Evang. Matt. viii. Vol. v. p. 361. † Vol. viii. p. 126.

Again, in his book on Heresies, speaking of the Carpocratians, Augustine says, "Tradition says one Marcelina belonged to that sect, who worshipped the images of Jesus, and Paul, and Homer, and Pythagoras, by adoring them and putting incense before them."*

We have space only for one more passage. It is from his work "De Civitate Dei," in which he adverts to the doctrines of Varro, who had made great progress towards the truth, but was not in possession of it.

"He, Varro, also says that the ancient Romans, for more than 170 years, worshipped their gods without an image. And if that custom, he says, had continued, the gods would have been more holily worshipped. And as a testimony to his own judgment, he cites, among others, the Jewish nation; nor does he hesitate to finish the passage by affirming, that those who first placed the images of the gods before the people, both robbed their republics of fear, and added error; wisely considering that the gods would easily fall into contempt by the absurdity of the images."†

How are we here irresistibly drawn to contemplate the parallel, and the contrast, between pagan and Christian Rome! The public worship of pagan Rome was preserved for 170 years free from the ensnaring and degrading superstition of worshipping the unseen divinity by the intervention of images; and a heathen could set his seal to the conviction, that, had their original custom continued, their worship would have been more pure and holy. Not for 170 years, but for at least that space three times told or rather quadrupled, did Christian Rome adhere in this respect to the faith and practice of the Apostolic age. And on

* Lib. de Hær. cap. vii.

† Lib. v. cap. xxxi.

the principles which the voice of Christendom re-echoes from all parts of the Lord's vineyard, we can only repeat and apply to our present subject the sentiments of the heathen Varro, "How much more pure and holy would the worship of Almighty God have been in the Church of his ever-blessed Son, had the heathenish corruption of worshipping by the intervention of images never thrust out the primitive and apostolical spiritual service!" That so lamentable a scandal, which has so long fixed its stain on Christendom, may, in God's good time, be expelled from His holy Church, it is our duty, patiently, and heartily, and unweariedly, to pray, and labour.

ST. JEROME, A. D. 418.*

We have already observed, that it is to this doctor of the Latin Church we are indebted for the preservation of that letter of Eusebius in which he records his zeal in tearing down a picture of Christ, or of a saint, which he found hanging in one of the churches in Palestine. The supporters of image-worship seem to have appealed only to two passages in the remains of this father; and the appeal is in both cases utterly futile.

Those who hold that an image is to be worshipped with the self-same adoration which is due to the being represented by the image, refer to a letter in which Jerome says, that Paula fell prostrate before the cross, and adored as though she saw our Lord hanging upon it. "But (say they) she adored the Lord with supreme worship, therefore it was with supreme worship that she adored the cross."

* Verona, 1734.

Here Cardinal Bellarmin, who held a different doctrine as to the nature of the worship to be paid to images, saves us all trouble, by himself pointing out that Paula did not worship the cross at all, but worshipped before it, as fervently as though she saw our Lord hanging upon it.*

Another passage to which we are referred by the Cardinal himself, is quoted to shew that the Jews worshipped the sanctuary. But the word used by St. Jerome in the passage means, in his vocabulary, “esteem,” “reverence,” such as all of us are ready to feel and to shew towards anything dedicated to God’s service; nay, he employs the same word to express the regard which a man feels towards any one thing above another. Thus he says, “A clergyman easily falls into contempt, if he is often invited to dinner and never refuses. . . . If you treat with neglect the person who asks you, he respects [*veneratur*] you more afterwards.”† Dissuading a clergyman from forming any secular habits, in the hope of conciliating the men of the world, he says, “The secular judge will pay more deference to a self-denying, than to a rich clergyman, and will respect [*venerabitur*] your holiness more than your wealth.”‡ The works of Jerome remarkably abound with this use of the word.

“The Jews formerly reverenced [*venerabantur*] the holy of holies, because in it was the mercy-seat, and the cherubim, and the ark of the covenant, and the manna, and Aaron’s rod: does not the sepulchre of

* Vol. i. p. 691, ad Eustochium, epist. cviii.

† Epist. lii. p. 267; Epist. xlvi., Paulæ et Eustoch. ad Marcellam, vol. i. p. 201.

‡ Epist. lii. p. 263.

our Lord seem to you more deserving of reverence [*venerabilius*]?"

But while in Jerome no vestige can be discovered of his approval, or even of his knowledge of the religious use of images in Christian worship, the language in which, like his contemporaries and predecessors, he speaks of idol-worship, leads us inevitably to the conclusion, that, had he known and approved of the use of images, he would have qualified his language, in order to except them from his condemnation. To expect to meet with prohibitions of an evil not yet in existence, is altogether preposterous. We have seen, in the case, both of Epiphanius, and of Eusebius, that when they observed any signs of such a superstition, either in an individual or among a Christian congregation, they reproved it, and put it to shame.

The passages, however, are very many in which Jerome not only condemns the folly of worshipping an image, but fixes the folly upon that very point in which pagan idols and images used by Christians entirely agree; the folly, that is, of a man falling down before an insensible material figure, the work of man's own hands. And whereas the Council of Trent* speaks distinctly of Christians not only kissing images, and uncovering the head, but falling prostrate before them, St. Jerome as distinctly says, that, to the best of his recollection, to "fall down to adore" is applied in Scripture to the worshippers of idols, and not of the true God. With the accuracy of his criticism we have no concern now; we are inquiring as to his testimony.

In his comment on Isaiah he says,† "The discourse is against the idolaters of the time in which the prophet

* Session xxv.

† Comment on Isaiah, Lib. xii. cap. xliv. vol. iv. p. 527.

lived ; and he convicts those who, despising the religion of Almighty God, bent down to images of wood, and adored the works of their own hands. . . . And not only shall the things which are made, but those who made them, be accounted for nothing. . . . And when the time of vengeance shall come, the works of their own hands will in no wise be able to rescue them ; but, being blind and insensible, will confound those who formed them. For who can believe that a deity can be formed by an axe, and an auger, and a mallet ? and that images can be cast in burning coals and melted, or suddenly rise into deities by help of a rule and a saw, and squarings, and compasses ? especially since the worthlessness of the art is proved by the hunger and thirst of the artificer. A wooden image is made, expressing a human form ; the more beautiful it is, the more august a god is it thought : and that which a long time grew in the woods, and was, according to the variety of trees, a cedar, oak, or pine, is placed in a shrine, and shut in an eternal prison. And, in a strange way, cuttings of it and chips are thrown upon the hearth to warm the maker of a god, and to dress his pottage ; and another part is fashioned into a god, so that, when the work is done, its maker may adore it, and pray the succour of his own work."

In his comment on Daniel, chap. iii., Jerome, remarking on the expression, very often repeated, of "falling down and worshipping the golden image,"* says, "Running over in my mind the whole of Holy Scripture, (unless my forgetfulness deceives me,) I never find that any of the saints fell down and

* Com. in Dan., cap. iii. vol. v. p. 636.

adored God; but whoever adored idols, and demons, and unlawful things, is said to have fallen down and adored, as in the present passage, not once, but frequently. And in the Gospel the devil saith to our Lord, ‘All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.’”

Jerome speaks of our possessing images, and our having idols painted on the walls of our temples; but the image we must thus possess is the image of God, according to whose likeness we were created, which was lost by sin, and must be regained by repentance; and the idols painted on the walls of our temples are the deformities of sin.* “We, too, can shew idols painted on the walls of our temple, when we are subject to all vices, and paint the conscience and divers images of sin in our heart. . . . There is no man who has not some image, either of holiness or of sin.”†

OROSIUS AND SEDULIUS, A. D. 400.

VINCENTIUS, A. D. 440.

These three are numbered in the Roman Canon Law among the Fathers whose works are to be received as orthodox. Not one word can be found in any of them, to imply that they knew any thing whatever of the existence of image-worship in their days. And certainly in the History of Orosius, and in his work on free-will, we should have expected to find traces of image-worship, had it been in being; and in the poem of Sedulius, and the parallel version in prose (if that be his), in which he laments the sad effects of idolatry, had Christians then worshipped the images of

* In Jerem., Hom. xiii. vol. v. p. 865.

† In Ezek., cap. viii. vol. v. p. 86.

the holy saints and martyrs, and the pure Virgin, and the divine Saviour, the poet must have taken advantage of the contrast between the objects of worship in the two cases.

A passage, however, has been quoted by Bellarmin and others, which, in words, seems to imply that Sedulius would have the cross worshipped. It is a very strange passage, in which the writer says, that the cross must be worshipped (*colenda* in the poem, *causam venerationis* and *adoranda* are the words used in the prose version, if sound criticism can admit that version as the production of the same man) because it comprehends the four quarters of the world, the head of Christ, as He hung upon the cross, embracing the east; the feet pleased with the west; the north being represented by the right; the south brightened by the left. This we must leave as we find it. One editor says the writer was a Scotsman; another says this writer and the Scot were different men. The whole of this evidence is so vague and confused, that we must be content with referring the reader to it. The prose never appeared till 1585: Bellarmin seems not to have known of the existence of any such version.*

Of Vincentius we cannot say less, than that, if the principles of Christian faith and worship which he pronounces to be fundamental, had been adhered to in the Roman Church, the Roman Church would to this day have been free from the deplorable inroads and innovations on the pure primitive worship of Christians which in an especial manner stamp her degeneracy.

At the close of his work on free-will, Orosius employs an expression to which we must all respond with

* See *Biblioth. Patr.*, tom. ix. p. 557.

hearty sympathy, “Jesus Christ is my witness; I confess I hate heresy, but not a heretic.”

In the “Bibliotheca Patrum,”* between the remains of Orosius and Sedulius, we find, among others, a work entitled “Consultations between Zaccheus, a Christian, and Apollonius, a philosopher.” That the date of this work is somewhere in the fifth century, no doubt is entertained: Fabricius sees reason for referring it to so late a date as A. D. 470; others think that too late by perhaps fifty years.

This work, merely as the production of the century to which all ascribe it, without reference to its author, affords valuable evidence on the point before us. We cannot conceive, that, had the worship of images been then recognised in the Christian Church, the heathen philosopher would have confined his objection, as he does, to the case of the images of the living emperors; nor could the Christian have made only the answer which we now read, as follows:—

Apollonius philosopher: “Your reproof has doubtless some show of truth, but can be met by a refutation. We [heathens] adore the statues and images of those whom we believe truly and religiously to be gods, or, as instructed by ancient tradition, do not know that they are not gods: and you [Christians] to whom that is an abomination, why do you venerate, even with public adoration, on the ground of reverence towards kings, images of men, either painted on wax tablets or formed of metal, and give even to men the honour, as yourselves preach, due to God only? If this is not allowable, but contrary to law, why do you Christians do this? or why do your priests not forbid it, that you

* Venice, 1773, vol. ix. p. 217.

may not, under the plea of duty, incur knowingly the very thing which you charge on us, though in ignorance, as an abomination?"

Here we would ask, if this philosopher could have alleged against the Christians not only the unjustifiable flattering homage which they joined the heathen in paying to the pictures and statues of their living sovereigns, but the religious worship of pictures and images of dead men and women, and unseen spirits, would he not of necessity have urged that objection? And then would not the Christian's answer have been totally different from what it is, and an answer which would have drawn a distinction between the worship of images by Christians, and of idols by the heathen; an answer, therefore, more in accordance with the positive, but, as we have shewn, unfounded assertion of the Council of Trent? The Christian's answer is as follows:—

"That indeed is what I am not bound to approve, nor can I; because, by the palpable commands of God, we are not permitted to adore the elements, nor the angels, nor any whatever of the powers of heaven and earth, or the air. This name [adoration] belongs to our duty to God, and is a reverence higher than all human veneration: but, just as flattery first drove men into an evil of this kind, so now custom scarcely recalls them from the error; in which, however, you find only an unguarded obsequiousness, not any divine worship. The excessive pleasure excited by seeing the likeness of countenances that are beloved, produces a greater expression of feeling than perhaps even those [kings] would require to whom it is shewn, or than they ought to express who shew it. And although the more strict Christians abhor this cus-

tom of unguarded obsequiousness, and their priests do not cease to forbid it, yet he is not called a god whose image is saluted; nor are the images fumed with frankincense; nor are they placed above altars to be worshipped; but they are exposed as memorials of merit, that they may afford to posterity an example of praiseworthy deeds, or bring back contemporaries from their bad conduct. The very persons to whom these marks of obsequiousness may be offered, were they consulted, would be unwilling for it to be done; or, although they do not extinguish such a custom of vainglory, yet without rashly assuming to themselves anything divine, they confess themselves mortals unworthy of the honour of God, to whom they owe what they are."

Here we find that consistent Christians held the heathen custom of worshipping the images of the living emperors in abhorrence, and that the ministers of their religion forbade its continuance; yet the practice, of which we have very many records, was too inveterate for the influence of Christianity to destroy at once. But, had the pictures and images of our blessed Lord, the Virgin Mary, the angels of heaven, and saints in heaven, been set up in the Christian churches, of necessity the heathen philosopher would have seized upon that, as the strongest proof of inconsistency in a Christian condemning the heathen for worshipping the images of those whom they believed to be gods, and at the same time himself worshipping the images of creatures.

CYRIL, ARCHBISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA, A. D. 440.*

When we read, as the words of this truly evangelical and apostolic man, in the close of his work on the

* Paris, 1638.

right faith, "Our hope is all in Christ," it would doubtless be matter of surprise to us, could we detect in his writings any indication of his approval of image-worship. Indeed, we are not aware of any appeal having been made to him by the advocates of that worship, though in the Tridentine Catechism his name is mentioned with many others. Were we to quote the passages in which, without any modification, or exception of Christian images, he condemns the worship of the works of men's hands, we should repeat what we have already again and again brought forward in the case of other primitive writers: and we have only room for one or two extracts.

We have seen how strangely and perversely the command, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve," was interpreted in the second Nicene Council, to forbid our serving any other being but God, yet not to forbid our worshipping any other, because the word *ONLY* is attached to "*serve*," and not to "*worship*." Instead of thus trifling with the word of God by frivolous and evasive subtleties, in order to escape from its plain and obvious force, (distinctions to which an honest man would be ashamed to have recourse in his own behalf, in the interpretation either of his father's will, or of an agreement between man and man,) Cyril accepts the command in all its breadth and fulness :

"The Son is one of those who are worshipped, not of those who worship; for it says, 'Let all the angels of God worship Him.' For not angels, but God alone, is any one ordered to worship; for it is written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.'"^{*}

* Thesaurus, vol. v. p. 71.

Instead of representing the mercy-seat and the cherubim as having been objects of worship to the Israelites, and thence inferring that it is agreeable to the analogy of faith for Christians to worship images, (as the members of the second Nicene Council, and Cardinal Bellarmin and other moderns, including the authors of the notes in the Douay Bible, have strangely argued,) Cyril writes, That the “Jewish priests, when they turned to the ark, and saw it, thought they were turned to God and saw Him; and if the mercy-seat is viewed spiritually, we say that it is He who was made man for us, whom God sent forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood.”*

We have seen that a common charge made by the heathen against the Christians was, that they worshipped the cross, and we have seen how this charge is met by a direct denial of its truth. Julian connects this charge with another, namely, that the Christians set up the form of the cross in their houses and before their doors, and signed their foreheads with it. Instead of replying to such ever-repeated charges, Cyril tells us that Christians used the sign of the honoured cross to remind them of their duty to cultivate every moral and spiritual excellence.†

Cyril abounds with passages in which he speaks of the image of God; but it is as that image is seen either in all its fulness in His ever-blessed Son; or else in the soul of man, who was created after the likeness of his Maker, and has that image, which was lost by sin, renewed and restored by repentance, and faithful obedience, through the free grace of God.‡

* De Adorat. in Spirit. et Ver., lib. ix. vol. i. p. 295.

† Cont. Julian., lib. vi. tom. vii. p. 194.

‡ See Comment. in Joan., tom. iv. p. 123.

ISIDORE OF PELUSIUM, A. D. 450.*

In the letters of this spiritually-minded man, of which more than two thousand have escaped the ravages of time, no trace of image-worship can be found. And yet in many of his epistles, had such an innovation been then brought into the Church, some reference to it might naturally have been expected. He laments one innovation on primitive Christian excellence, which, being in his time a growing evil, paid more attention to the visible decking and ornaments of the ecclesiastical buildings, than to the adorning the Church itself, the congregation of Christian souls, with spiritual graces.

“Were the choice given to me,” he says, “for my part, I should rather have lived in those times when the churches were not yet so decked, but when the Church was crowned with divine and heavenly graces, than in these times, when the churches are beautified with all kinds of marbles, and the Church is stripped naked and bare of those spiritual graces.”†

The only image of God of which Isidore speaks, is primarily, and in the highest sense, His ever-blessed Son;‡ and, in a real though secondary sense, the soul of a Christian devoted to God.§ But we hear from him of no visible and material image of our blessed Saviour, or of the saints, set up and worshipped.

* Paris, 1638.

† Lib. ii. epist. cclvi.

‡ Lib. ii. epist. cxliii.

§ Lib. i. epist. xvi.

THEODORET, A. D. 457.*

While no appeal seems to have been made to this copious writer in support of image-worship, his works abound with proofs that his principles of interpreting Scripture, and his views generally on the points before us, were altogether at variance with the supposition, that he either approved, or was even cognisant, of any practice among Christians of employing images in their worship.

The language in which he condemns the preposterous folly of idol-worship is equally applicable to images in Christian churches. "They are," he says, "senseless, motionless, lifeless representations of invisible beings, and unable to protect themselves from insult, or those who made them from harm."† The passages are many in which he must have made exceptions of such images as are now set up in churches, had they existed in his time.

The following objection, for example, applies equally to the image or painting of our blessed Lord and of the Virgin Mary, and of a saint, as to the image of Jupiter, and Juno, and Diana. "'They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of corruptible man.' Unwilling to understand that the Creator of all things is free from corruption, and higher than all objects of sight, these men call the images of their own bodies deities; for the makers of statues and effigies, and painters, do not make their images resemblances even of their invisible souls, but of their corruptible bodies."‡

And as now among the worshippers of images we

* Halle, 1769. † Psalm cxiii. vol. i. part ii. p. 1413.

‡ In Rom., cap. i. vol. iii. part i. p. 25.

find most contradictory opinions maintained, so Theodoret tells us that vast disputes prevailed among the worshippers of idols, as to the nature of the gods whom their idols represented:

“ So great a battle is there among their poets and philosophers concerning those which are not, but are called gods. To these they build temples and raise altars; and honour them with sacrifices; and, fabricating certain effigies and likenesses of stone and wood and other materials, they address the works of their hands as gods; and the images produced by the art of Phidias, Polycletus, and Praxiteles, they deem worthy of a divine appellation. Charging them with this error, Xenophanes says, ‘ Mortals think that the gods are born, and have the same senses, and voice, and bodies with ourselves.’* ”

In his interpretation of holy Scripture, too, Theodoret is far from countenancing those forced meanings which such men as Bellarmin himself are not ashamed to press into their service, when they seek for some ground in the sacred volume on which to build their innovations. Thus, on the passage in the Psalms which we translate, “ Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His footstool,” and which they, in proof that creatures are to be honoured on account of their relation to God, interpret, “ Worship his footstool,”† Theodoret makes this comment:—

“ Make such a return as you can to your Benefactor, and offer the reverence due to Him. ‘ Exalt Him;’ that is, proclaim His exalted state. ‘ His footstool:’ in former days the Temple of Jerusalem

* Græc. Affect. Curat., disp. iii. vol. iv. part ii. p. 779.

† Bell., lib. ii. cap. xii. “ Adorate scabellum pedum ejus.” Ps. xcix.
5. This is the translation of the Roman Vulgate. Vide Sup. p. 99.

was so called, but now the churches throughout all the land and sea, in which we offer our worship to the most holy God.”*

The forced and unnatural attempt in the second Council of Nice to distinguish between “*service*” and “*worship*,” to which we have already adverted, is as contrary to the interpretation of Theodoret, as it is to common sense. “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.” “This only forbids you,” said they, “to *serve* any thing else; it does not forbid you to *worship* any thing else; therefore it does not forbid our worshipping of images.” But the lesson which we learn of Theodoret is of a very different kind. In answer to a question arising from Exodus, chap. xx., “What is the difference between an idol and a similitude?” (a graven image and a likeness, as we read it,) having said that the idol is nothing in existence, and the likeness is the image and resemblance of something, and having illustrated this by instancing the gods of Egypt and of Greece, Theodoret says: “These the Lawgiver bids us neither worship nor serve. Yet he does not simply forbid both these, but, since it may happen that a person through fear of man may outwardly worship, and yet not serve in his soul, the Lawgiver teaches us that both are impious.”†

He describes the cherubim, and the brazen serpent, but he does not hint that they were made objects of religious worship to the Israelites.‡

We must content ourselves with one other instance of the manner in which the sentiments and language of Theodoret run counter to the innovations and

* Vol. i. part ii. p. 1307.

† Vol. i. part i. p. 149.

‡ Vol. i. part i. p. 163; vol. i. part i. p. 246.

superstitions of the Romish Church. That Church holds, that, while the service called “*latria*” is to be confined to the Supreme Being, the religious worship called “*dulia*” is of right due to the angels and saints, a middle worship being still reserved exclusively for the blessed Virgin. And, as we have seen, canonised saints of that Church have held, that *dulia* is to be paid to the images of saints, while *latria* is due only to the images of the Godhead, and to the cross. That Theodoret could not have recognised, or been familiar with such unwarrantable sophisms, though evident throughout, is especially shewn in the following passage:—*

“ He [Joshua] exhorts them to sever themselves from the service [*dulia*] of the strange gods, and to serve [*latria*] God alone, who made and saved them. He moreover gives them the choice, saying to them, ‘ Choose for yourselves to-day whom you will serve [*latria*], whether the gods of your fathers beyond the rivers, or the gods of the Amorites, among whom ye dwell in their land.’ Having thus offered to the rest the choice, he shews the piety of his own mind: ‘ As for me and my house,’ he says, ‘ we will serve [*latria*] the Lord God, for He is holy.’ Then, when the people renounced the worship [*latria*] of false gods, and promised to serve [*dulia*] God alone, who saved them, the most pious Joshua taking it up, says to them, ‘ Ye cannot serve [*latria*] the Lord, because God is holy; and being jealous with you, he will not bear your iniquities and sins when ye shall desert the Lord and serve [*latria*] other gods.... And when they accepted this also, and promised to serve [*dulia*] the Lord, he urges on them, ‘ Ye are witnesses against

* Quest. on Josh., cap. xxiv. vol. i. part i. p. 319.

yourselves, that you have chosen the Lord to serve [dulia] Him.' ”

PROSPER, A. D. 460.

This being a writer whom the canon law of Rome designates as a very religious man, we mention his name here merely to say, that not a trace of image-worship is to be found in any of his remains. He was the disciple, and friend, and defender of the great St. Augustine; and certainly, trained as he was under such a master, we should have been astonished had we found in him any intimation of his acquiescence in the worship of images; and there is none.

POPE LEO, A. D. 461.*

It is impossible for a Church to give its sanction to any one of its teachers and saints more fully and unreservedly than the Church of Rome has given her sanction to Pope Leo. On the subject of our present inquiry, had the images of our Saviour, or the blessed Virgin, or the saints been then set up in the churches for religious worship; or had the cross been an object of adoration then as it is now in the Church of Rome; it is scarcely possible to conceive that Leo's sermons would have been without any vestige of such practices. He delivered sermons in great numbers upon the festival of Christ's nativity, upon His crucifixion, and upon His resurrection. He preached on the anniversaries of St. Peter and St. Paul, apostrophising the city of Rome as having been signally blessed by the teaching and example of those two great Apostles; and apostrophising Peter as the honoured

* Venice, 1753.

tutelary saint of grateful and admiring Rome. Had their images then adorned the walls of the churches in Rome, or had our blessed Lord's image then been lifted up on high to be worshipped, some reference to it would assuredly have fallen from him. But we seek in vain for any intimations of the kind.

There are, however, some passages of so directly contrary a tendency, that we do not wonder at the anxiety which has been shewn to explain away their force, and escape from the application of them to modern superstitions. Indeed, if the principles which Leo professes had been acted upon as Christian charity required, such stumbling-blocks as image-worship would never have been placed in the way of sincere but humble believers. Thus, in his third sermon on our Lord's nativity, he urges his audience to be on their guard against the illusions of the enemy of souls, who would by his machinations try to corrupt the religious joys of that blessed day, by suggesting the adoption of the views of some deceived men, who held the day sacred, not so much on account of the birth of Christ, as on account of the rising of the new Sun, as they termed it. "Whose hearts," he continues, "involved in deep darkness, are severed from all increase of the true light. They are drawn away by the most absurd errors of the heathen; and because they cannot raise their minds above what they see with their eyes of flesh, they venerate with divine honour the ministering luminaries of the world. May such impious superstition and monstrous deception be far removed from Christians! Beyond all measure eternal things are distant from temporal, incorporeal from corporeal, the subjects from their sovereign Lord. Though those things have a beauty to be admired, they have

no divinity to be adored. That excellence, then, that wisdom, that majesty is to be worshipped, which created the universal world out of nothing, and by His omnipotent mind produced the heavenly and earthly matter into such forms and measures as to Him seemed good.”*

Leo is here speaking of paying religious reverence to God’s creatures, and condemns it as heathenish. But now we have the worship of images defended on the evidence of Scripture, “that some ground is holy,” “that Christ forbids His followers to swear by the heaven, because it is God’s throne, or by the earth, for it is His footstool,” and “therefore both are creatures to be religiously honoured, because of their relation to God.”†

Again, after speaking of the idolatry which certain fatalists and astrologers encouraged, he reprobates a custom which he traces to the same origin; and that in words which testify against all who allow themselves in any practice which is unauthorised by true religion, and which exposes to error those who are less learned and less grounded in the faith. He says :

“ Of such practices this impiety is the offspring, that the sun rising at the opening of the light of day is from eminences adored by some of the less wise class ;‡ a practice which even some Christians so far themselves religiously observe, that, before they come to the church of the blessed Apostle Peter, which is dedicated to the one living and true God, having mounted the steps by which they ascend to the level of the higher floor, turning their bodies, they look to the rising sun,

* Vol. i. p. 72. † See Bellarmin, tom. ii. lib. ii. cap. xii.

‡ See serm. lxxxii., on the birth-day (that is, the martyrdom) of Peter and Paul, p. 322.

and bowing their necks, they bend themselves in honour of the brilliant orb. That this should be done partly by the fault of ignorance, partly by the spirit of paganism, we are much depressed and grieved; because, although SOME PERHAPS WORSHIP THE CREATOR OF THE FAIR LUMINARY RATHER THAN THE LUMINARY ITSELF, WHICH IS A CREATURE, yet it is our duty to abstain even from the very appearance of that office, which, when he who has left the worship of the gods finds among our people, will he not retain with himself, as a thing to be approved, this part of his old opinion which he finds to be common to Christians and to the pagans [*impiis*] ? Let, then, such reprehensible perverseness be cast away far from Christians, and let not the honour due to God only be mingled with the rites of those who serve creatures. Awake then, O man, and acknowledge the dignity of your nature. Remember you were made after the image of God, which, though it was corrupted in Adam, was formed again in Christ. Use the visible creatures as they ought to be used, as you use the earth, sea, heavens, air, fountains, and rivers. . . . Touch the corporeal light with the corporeal sense; and with the entire feeling of the mind embrace that true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. For if we are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in us, what every faithful one has in his own mind, is more than what is admired in the heavens."*

Of the cross of Christ he speaks as we hope no son or daughter of the Church of England will ever be ashamed to speak.† But when he speaks of the cross, it is not a frame of wood or stone set up to be wor-

* Serm. viii., in Nat. Dom., p. 95.

† Serm. iv., de Pass. Dom., pp. 209, 227, &c.

shipped, but that cross on which Christ shed His blood, or that moral and spiritual cross which all Christians are bound to bear.

We will quote only one more passage from this great oracle of the Church of Rome, and we would gladly have found that its sentiments had been more satisfactorily adopted by his successors, and by the Romish Church at large:—

“ What need is there to admit into the heart what the law has not taught, what prophecy has not proclaimed, what the truth of the Gospel has not preached, what the Apostolic doctrine has not delivered down? ”*

Had Leo's principles here been realised, there would have been no images in Christian churches.

Through the forty years which elapsed between the death of Leo and the conclusion of the fifth century, six several Pontiffs occupied the Papal throne: Hilarius, A. D. 461; Simplicius, A. D. 467; Felix, A. D. 483; Gelasius, A. D. 492; Anastasius, A. D. 496; and Symmachus, A. D. 498, whose life was extended to A. D. 514, that is, fourteen years beyond the period to which our present inquiry is limited. For although we must give a general view of the state of Christendom with regard to image-worship through the two following centuries, we consider five hundred years more than enough to enable us to pronounce, with unhesitating confidence, that the whole system is an innovation; that, so far from having any ground or countenance in holy Scripture, it militates against the plainest dictates of God's word, and the broadest and most palpable principles of faith

* Epist. xii. vol. i. p. 704.

and conduct; and so far from being supported by the testimony of the earliest Fathers and accredited teachers in the Church of Christ, that not a vestige of it is to be found in their works as a practice approved by them, while the overwhelming mass of their evidence runs directly against it.

In the works of these six Popes who lived between Leo and Hormisda, successor to Symmachus, not a syllable can be found to intimate that they either approved of image-worship in the Church, or were cognisant of its existence. And yet, in their letters to bishops, and emperors, on subjects of Church discipline, there were many points ruled, or suggested, or forbidden, of far less moment than image-worship. We find, throughout the proceedings at this time, an uniform, steady, untiring determination to establish the supremacy of the Papal government of Rome above all the churches in the world; and not only do we find mandates issued through distant provinces to refer all cases of difficulty and privilege to the decision of the Apostolate, a title which the bishopric of Rome had assumed to itself; but we find repeated references to Rome on subjects both of doctrine and discipline. In the Pontifical book,* whatever be its authority, Pope Symmachus is said to have adorned the churches with various silver ornaments, shrines, crosses, and images; but whether this be so or not, there is not a shadow of an intimation that they were set up as objects of religious worship. But they warn us how far more safe, and wise, and Christian a thing it is to preserve the Church of God free from those innovations, which weak and corrupt nature can scarcely fail to convert into superstition.

* See Conc. Gen. A. D. 498.

Although we have already examined the evidence of the Primitive Church down to a date below the period within which we purposed to limit our inquiry, so very important a witness existed at the end of the sixth century, that we are induced to devote some time to his testimony, as a link connecting the ages in the Christian Church which were free from the superstition of image-worship, with those which have been tarnished and to a great extent, unchristianised, by that inroad on Apostolical worship. The witness we advert to is Pope Gregory the Great, who succeeded to the see of Rome A. D. 590, and died A. D. 604. How many and deplorable were the superstitions which had forced themselves within the precincts of the Christian sanctuary, or had stealthily insinuated themselves, displacing some doctrinal or practical truths, or else mingling themselves with others, and making them more like the offspring of paganism than of the Gospel, we have had already many occasions to lament. And even the very testimony of Gregory the Great, though it proves that at the commencement of the seventh century the religious worship of idols was still discountenanced in Christendom, yet tells us too plainly that in many departments degrading errors had already established themselves, and that in many others seeds were sown in a soil already prepared for them, the fruits of which were destined to convert the pure unadulterated worship of the Almighty, as it came fresh from the Gospel, into a debasing superstition, mingling it with heathenish and unspiritual rites ; and under the plea of exalting Christian faith, cutting away the very foundation of true and certain Christian hope ; teaching for doctrines the inventions of men, and paving the way for that maxim, (the dreadful result of which we have with

sorrow of heart and astonishment witnessed), EITHER ROME OR INFIDELITY. But on the subject of image-worship the evidence of Gregory the Great is quite satisfactory, though, by the language in which he prescribed the use of pictures and images in the churches, he has unhappily, though unwittingly, lent his name to countenance the worst sort of that profanation. The passages are well known, but it will be more safe to quote them in this place.

While Gregory was Bishop of Rome; Serenus was Bishop of Marseilles. At that time many in the south of Gaul remained unconverted pagans, and the converts to Christianity still retained much of their former superstitions; among others, the paying of religious adoration to the visible material representations of invisible spirits—a custom to which the unsound principle of allowing evil that good may come induced the rulers in Christ's Church too readily to give countenance. By doing so, they probably made the change from paganism to the outward profession of Christianity more easy, and so increased the numbers of those who called themselves Christians; but at the same time they lowered the holy religion of spirit and truth to the corruptions of degenerate human nature, which has ever hankered after visible objects of worship, substituting outward observances for the inward conversion of the heart.

Serenus, observing that pictures and images in the churches laid too strong a temptation before the people, and acting on the principle of St. Augustine, that images set up in holy places would naturally seduce men to make them objects of worship, and finding by his own experience professed Christians actually worshipping pictures and images within his diocese, had

them taken down and destroyed. Like Phinehas of old, he was zealous for the honour of his God, and he resolved at once to cut up the noxious growing evil, root and branch ; and to this day Christendom may lament, that, instead of being commended for his zeal to its full extent, and seconded in it, he was rebuked by the Roman Pontiff. The first letter which Gregory wrote to Serenus is couched in these terms :*—

“ That we have been so long in writing to you, Brother, put down not to indifference, but to my engagements. The bearer of these, our most beloved son Cyriacus, the father of a monastery, I commend to you in all things, that no delay may detain him in Marseilles, but that he may proceed to our brother and fellow-bishop, Syagrius, with the consolation of your Holiness, under the protection of God.”

“ Besides, I apprise you, that long ago information was brought to us, that you, brother, witnessing some adorers † of images, broke in pieces the same images in the churches, and cast them out. Now, we praise you for your zeal in preventing any thing made with hands from being worshipped, but we apprise you, that you ought not to break the said images ; for on this account is a picture admitted in the churches, that those who are unlearned, at least by looking on the walls, may read what they cannot read in books. You ought, then, brother, both to preserve them, and to prohibit the people from worshipping them ; so that those who are ignorant of letters may have the means of obtaining a knowledge of history, and the people never sin at all in the adoration of the picture.”

Looking to human nature, as the knowledge of

* Paris, 1705, vol. ii. epist. lib. ix. epist. cv.

† “ Imaginum adoratores.”

history leads us to look, we cannot help seeing that Gregory was unintentionally enjoining two inconsistent and incompatible things. From paying religious *reverence* to images and pictures hung up in our holiest places of religious *worship*, (and that is, at the very least, what the Council of Trent commands,) the transition is very short and easy to the religious adoration of them. It ever has been so; it is so now; and while human nature remains the same, it ever must be so. And that Gregory himself did not any longer regard images and pictures as merely works of art, fitted to adorn churches, and to teach the unlearned, but as possessing a claim for religious reverence, we learn from the following circumstance, to which the advocates for the system of the Romish Church are fond of referring.*

A certain Jew, lately converted, had, with some ungovernable companions, taken forcible possession of a synagogue on Easter-day, and had carried into it an image or picture of the Virgin and of Christ, and a cross, and the white garment in which he had been baptized the day before; and Gregory, directing that reparation be made, prescribes that the picture, and the cross (which he calls venerable†) should be removed “with the veneration that is due.”

What Gregory would term due veneration does not appear; certainly he denounces worship, or adoration. Probably he meant merely that the removal should be made not tumultuously nor recklessly, but just as we are charged to place the offerings on the Lord’s table, reverently. Be this as it may, Serenus seems to have thought it improbable that Gregory should have written that letter, and to have suspected some unjus-

* Epist. lib. ix. epist. vi. vol. ii. p. 930.

† “Venerandam.”

tifiable interference on the part of Cyriacus, who was entrusted with it. For this he was reproved by Gregory, who, in a letter too long for transcription here, resumes the subject of his former communication thus:—

“ It had been reported to us, that, inflamed with indiscreet zeal, you had broken some images of the saints, under the plea that they ought not to be worshipped: and in truth for having forbidden them to be worshipped we praised you; for having broken them we blamed you. Say, brother, by what priest did we ever hear that what you did was done. . . . For to adore a picture is one thing, to learn by means of a picture what ought to be adored is another. For what writing effects for those who read, the same does a picture for unlearned persons who see it. . . . This point ought to have been especially attended to by you who live among the heathen, lest, when you were inflamed by a right zeal unwarily, you should raise a scandal in savage minds. That, therefore, ought not to be broken which was placed in the church not to be adored, but only to instruct the minds of the ignorant: and because antiquity has not without reason suffered the history of the saints to be painted in venerable places, had you seasoned your zeal with discretion, beyond doubt you would have been able with benefit to obtain what you desired, and not to scatter the flock which was gathered, but rather to collect what was scattered. . . . You must call together the dispersed sons of the Church, and shew them by proofs of Holy Scripture that it is unlawful for anything made with hands to be worshipped; since it is written, ‘Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.’ And then you must add, that the paintings of images

were formed for the edification of the unlearned, that, being ignorant of letters, they might, by seeing the story, learn what has been done ; and that, because you saw that it passed into worship, you were moved to order the images to be broken. And say to them, ' If for that instruction, for which images were anciently made, you wish to have them in the church, I allow them by all means to be made and had.' And tell them, that not the mere sight of the history displeased you, but that worship which was improperly paid to the images. . . . And if any one desires to make images, by no means forbid them ; but by every means forbid images to be worshipped. But anxiously, my brother, admonish them, that from the sight of the historical subject they cherish a warmth of compunction, and humbly prostrate themselves in the worship of the Omnipotent Trinity alone."*

Another passage from this Pope Gregory will shew what great progress superstition had then already made, though as yet it fell far short of its future character when fully matured. Every page of this eventful history of the Church warns us that, what the wise man says of strife is singularly applicable in the case of every kind of superstitious innovation : " The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water ; therefore leave off contention before it be meddled with."* No sooner does superstition find for itself the smallest aperture through the barriers which the Scripture and primitive antiquity raised to keep it out, than it begins to force its way more and more rapidly and freely ; and nothing is able to stay its violence, till it has flooded the fairest portion of God's heritage, destroying some

* Lib. xi. epist. xiii. p. 1099.

† Prov. xvii. 14.

parts, undermining others, and changing and corrupting the face of the whole. Whether we refer it to the judgment of the Almighty against any innovation that tampers with the integrity and purity of His worship; or to the tendency of fallen human nature ever to relapse into idolatry; or however it may be accounted for, the fact seems indisputable, that any superstitious practice, though at first apparently innocent, and though its advocates may profess to provide against its abuse, has an inevitable tendency to grow and generate, and to prepare an easy reception for something sevenfold worse than itself. In the following passages of Gregory we find evidences of innovations allowed and entertained by him, which through the first centuries would have been condemned as baneful superstitions and perversions of the truth as it is in Jesus; while in the same passages we find him condemning practices which in subsequent ages the most celebrated doctors and saints of the Church of Rome approved and maintained. "Let no image or picture be admitted on any account into the Christian Church," said Eusebius; so said the Council of Eliberis, and others, before the first Nicene Council. "On no account forbid images and pictures to be made and kept in churches; they are the books of the unlearned; but by all and every means forbid any worship or adoration to be paid to them:" so said Gregory the Great A. D. 600. "Worship the image of Christ, and adore it with the same adoration with which you worship Christ Himself:" so said the canonised saints, Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventura (both in the middle of the thirteenth century), with Naclantus in the middle of the sixteenth century, and many others before and since.

But we must now bring our remarks on Gregory the Great to a close, by two or three more quotations which will verify what we have above alleged. In a very long letter to Secundinus, Gregory, as the epistle now stands, writes thus:—*

“The images which you requested to be sent by Dulcidus, the deacon, we have sent. Your request very much delighted me, because with your whole heart and mind you are seeking Him whose image you desire to have before your eyes, that your bodily sight may daily supply an exercise; that while you see His picture, you may be inflamed in mind towards Him whose image you desire to see. We are not acting improperly, if we shew invisible things by visible. I know indeed that you do not ask for an image of our Saviour, that you may worship it as if it were God; but in order that, from a remembrance of the Son of God, you may glow with the love of Him whose image you desire to see. And we, too, do not prostrate ourselves before it, as if it were before a divinity; but we adore Him, whom by the image we remember to have been born or to have suffered, but at the same time to be seated on a throne. And while the picture itself, as a writing, brings back to our memory the Son of God, it either makes us glad on account of His resurrection, or soothes us on account of His passion. Wherefore I have directed to you two *surturiae*,† containing the

* It must be observed, that the letter as a part of which this is quoted, is most corrupt, and that this passage, on which much stress has been laid, is found in very few manuscripts, and, indeed, would in itself raise a suspicion that it was not from the pen of Gregory. The letter is found lib. ix. epist. liii.

† “*Surturias*.” Some say this word meant a sort of garment, others a kind of shield, on which the pictures were drawn.

pictures of God our Saviour, and holy Mary parent of God, and of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and one cross, and also a key as a benediction from the most holy body of Peter, Prince of the Apostles, that you may remain defended from the malicious one by Him, by whose sign you believe yourself to be protected."

These letters of Gregory (taking their genuineness for granted) abound with numberless proofs of the melancholy depths of superstition in other departments, into which the holy religion of the Gospel was then rapidly sinking, or rather (though worse degeneracy awaited the Church of Rome) into which it had already sunk. A very few specimens are needed to shew how much such superstitions paved the way for image-worship.*

In a long letter to Richard, King of the Visigoths, he thus announces the presents he had sent him:—

“ We have sent to you a very small key from the most sacred body of the blessed Apostle Peter, as his benediction, in which is inclosed some iron from his chains, that what bound his neck for martyrdom may loose yours from all sins. I have also given the bearer a cross to be offered to you, in which is some wood of the Lord’s cross, and the hair of the blessed John the Baptist, from which [cross] you may always have the comfort of our Saviour, by the intercession of His forerunner.”†

In a letter to one Andrew the Noble, he writes:

“ I have sent you a most sacred key from the body of the holy Apostle Peter, which is wont to shine forth with many miracles upon the sick, for it has within it

* Lib. ix. epist. cxxii. p. 1031.

† Lib. i. epist. xxx. p. 519.

some portion of his chains. May the same chains, then, which bound that holy neck, being hung from your neck, sanctify it.”*

In a letter to Dynamius he thus speaks on the same topic :—

“ I have sent, as the benediction of the blessed Apostle Peter, a very small cross, in which are inserted benefits† from his chains, which bound his neck for a time, but may loosen your neck from sins for ever ; and in four parts around, benefits from the gridiron of the blessed Laurence, on which he was burnt, that this on which his body was burnt for the truth, may kindle your mind to the love of God.”‡

In a letter to Asclepiodotus the same idea is conveyed, but the benefit to be effected by suspending the key from his neck is thus expressed :—“ that it may defend you against all adversities.”

In another letter, to Savinella§ and other women, he tells them he had sent them a key from St. Peter’s body, containing a benediction from his chains, “ which,” he adds, “ being suspended from your neck, this, which was to him the cause of martyrdom, may, through his intercession, be to you the grace of absolution.”

While we read these sentiments and such as these from the pen of the head of the Roman Church at the close of the sixth century, are we not involuntarily led to ask at every turn, Can this be the religion which our blessed Saviour founded by His Gospel, which the holy Apostles preached, and which the Catholic Church preserved entire for centuries after its first professors were called to their rest in heaven ?

* Lib. iii. epist. xxxiii. p. 648.

† “ Beneficia.”

‡ Lib. xi. epist. xiv. p. 1182.

§ Lib. xii. epist. vii. p. 1185.

Contemporary with Gregory the Great was Gregory of Tours, the first person of note in the Roman Church who ventured to assert the assumption of the Virgin Mary, body and soul, into heaven, a story which he drew from that false Melito, whose work, a century before, Pope Gelasius and the Roman council had pronounced to be apocryphal and forged. Had the zealous love of primitive worship shewn by Sernus, Bishop of Marseilles, in his destruction of the images which he found to be then made objects of religious worship through his diocese, and the reproof of Gregory the Great to that more primitive shepherd of the Lord's fold, not informed us what rapid and gigantic strides superstition had already taken in the West, Gregory of Tours would have intimated to us that at least the day of image-worship was then opening and hastening on. He does not speak of any worship either due to images or paid to them by others, but, in the midst of many legends and stories unworthy of a Christian, much more unworthy of a canonised bishop of the Church, he gives currency to the opinion, that some holy and mysterious power resided in images, and thus he helped in preparing the way for the offering of religious worship, mental and bodily, to them.*

Between the death of Gregory the Great and the fatal second Council of Nice, almost two sad and dreary centuries intervened; and through that whole period the Christian's eye can find few spots on which to rest with anything like comfort and satisfaction. Harassed and persecuted from without by the rising infidel powers of Mahometanism, distracted with internal discords and divisions, hating one another more

* *De Gloria Martyrum*, lib. i. cap. xiv. and xxiii.

than the common enemy of the faith, Christians present through much of that interval a melancholy proof of the inefficiency of the name, when disjoined from the spirit of the Gospel. The temporal power of the Pope grew rapidly, and the ecclesiastical dominion of Old Rome was arrayed against the temporal sovereignty of New Rome, as Constantinople was then called. Meanwhile the leaven of superstition was spreading like a canker through the Church; the worship of God was subjected to new and greater corruptions, all tending towards the principles of heathenism, or rather of our fallen nature, which has throughout a hankering after visible objects of worship, and material representations of the unseen divinity. And, in this work of corruption, we find the Roman See to be the very centre and the chief promoter of error, perseveringly upholding the supporters of that work, and denouncing its opponents, and that in a more especial manner with regard to the deplorable error of image-worship. While the ancient service was strongly maintained in the East and in the West, and the innovation of image-worship was opposed by the Greeks on the one side, and by the Germans, Franks, and Britons on the other, Rome put forth all her might, secular and ecclesiastical, to establish it; condemning by the most deadly anathemas all who refused to receive it, and withdrawing her allegiance from the Emperors of Constantinople because they dared to withstand the fatal corruption. This is a sad page of the history of the Church, and we will dwell on it no longer than a brief outline of the history of image-worship may require, with a view to our understanding the entire subject more clearly.

In the year 726 Pope Gregory II. held a council at

Rome, (called the third,) in which he argues thus:—
“ If Moses and Solomon, at the command of God, made cherubim of wood, covered with gold, how much more ought we to worship and adore Christ our God, engraven in a pure heart and mind, and the holy Mary ever Virgin, and the Apostles also, and all the saints of God, through their sacred effigies and images ? ” &c. But this Gregory and his council did not stop here. “ A curse was imprecated on the heresy of image-breakers and their followers; and casting off all fellowship with the governor of New Rome, that is to say, Leo the Emperor, and with those who followed him, Gregory bound both the emperor and his followers by the anathema of the council, and he forbade the tribute to be paid which had been paid up to that time, after he had laboured by letters to bring Leo back from the hatred of God, and to the worship of sacred images.”* Or, as another account expresses it, “ Learning which, the divine Pope of Rome, Gregory, having convened a divine and holy council, nobly subjected the enemies of images to a curse, and urged many vehement arguments to the King Leo.”

Probably the fact which Gregory is here said to have learned, but which the extract contained in the history of the council does not specify, was, that Leo had openly denounced image-worship. Here at every step we are reminded of the strange assertions of Romish bishops of the present day, that, since image-worship is a matter only† of discipline, it is of little consequence whether images were admitted into the churches in primitive times, or not. If opposition to image-worship was called a heresy, and all those who

* *Sacros. Concil.*, A. D. 726, (Venice, 1729,) vol. viii. pp. 192, 196.

† See Dr. Wiseman’s *Lectures*. vol. ii. p. 130.

did not receive and honour images were subject to the curse and malediction pronounced on heretics, it seems trifling to set up a distinction between matters of faith and discipline. Had these men been convicted of the grossest heresy that ever disgraced the Christian name, what more bitter punishment could the Roman Pontiff have had in reserve for them, than excommunications and anathemas ?

Gregory II. was succeeded by Gregory III., A. D. 731, who was forced away from the bier of his predecessor to the pontificate, and of whom the very first recorded act after his election was, the sending of letters, written with all the vigour of the Apostolic See, to the Emperors Leo and Constantine, urging them to repent of the errors which they had entertained against image-worship. On the detention of his messengers in Sicily,* he convened a council of ninety-three bishops in Rome, and subjected to excommunication from the holy Eucharist, and from the unity and bond of the whole Church, all who dared, against the veneration of the sacred images, to destroy, pull down, or blaspheme them, and “struck with a dreadful curse those who opposed this decree.”†

Gregory III. was followed by Pope Zachary, Stephen II., Stephen III., Paul, and Stephen IV.; of all of whom Pope Adrian, in his letter to Charlemagne, declares, that, fervent in the Holy Ghost for the setting up of holy images, they possessed zeal for THE RIGHT FAITH. Adrian, moreover, specifies, that Gregory II., together with seventy-nine bishops, resolved to worship and adore the sacred images; and that his immediate predecessor, Stephen, together with bishops from some parts of France and Italy, confirming the

* Conc. Gen. p. 196.

† P. 218.

acts of his predecessor, with all the assistant bishops, decreed the adoration and worship “of the sacred images.”

It must here be observed, that Pope Adrian, so far from regarding the worship of images as a matter merely of discipline, identifies zeal in the cause of image-worship with zeal for the true faith. It must also be remembered, as a fact of much importance, that Adrian himself records that only from some parts of Italy and France* did bishops come to join the Pope in his decrees for the worship of images. We find that the large body of Christians, clergy and laity, in the West, through France, Germany, and Britain, resisted the new superstition, till they were overborne and silenced by the power and machinations of Rome.

While the popes and their partisans in Old Rome employed all their authority and influence to establish image-worship, the emperors at Constantinople, or New Rome, put forth all their energies to suppress and destroy it. The representations of different authors as to the proceedings on both sides are very conflicting; and it is not necessary for us to pronounce on their respective merits. The Romanist writers brand the opponents of that superstition with most degrading terms of reproach and obloquy, and employ language utterly unworthy of civilised and Christian men. While some writers say, that the emperors were driven to strong measures for the removal of images, by witnessing the gross idolatry with which they began to be worshipped, and also by the too just reproaches and revilings which this idolatrous service drew upon Christianity itself from the Jews and Mahometans;

* Adrian twice limits the bishops to parts of France and Italy. (Conc. vol. viii. pp. 1580, 1584.)

others say, that these proceedings originated with the Jews and Turks, and were levelled against the Christian faith. While some call these royal opponents of image-worship heretics, enemies to the true faith, and persecutors of Christians, others speak of them as pious, devoted, orthodox servants of God, faithful kings, struggling together with the Apostles, moved by an excellent and divine zeal, and not enduring to see the Church of the faithful made the prey of the wicked one.* There is, however, no doubt of the fact, that the Emperor Leo III., about A. D. 730, published an edict against image-worship, which led to most disastrous consequences, both in the East and the West, and in Rome excited so violent a feeling against the Emperor, as led, under the fostering hand of the popes, to the renunciation of the allegiance of the people; and to the treading of the Emperor's statutes under foot.

Leo was succeeded in the Empire by his son, Constantine, called, in derision, Copronymus, A. D. 741; who proceeded, with equal zeal, but with more discretion, to carry on the same work which his father had left unfinished. Instead of putting forth decrees, and executing them in his own name, he called a council of Eastern bishops together to Constantinople, who met, to the number of three hundred and thirty-eight. This council, called by its members the Seventh General Council, was stigmatised as an heretical and unauthorised synod by the second Council of Nice; and even for our knowledge of what took place in it we are indebted to the last acts of the latter council, in which all the proceedings of the former are rehearsed, passage by passage, in order that they may be

* See second Nicene Council, act. vi.

set at nought, and held up to contempt. These proceedings deserve a careful examination ; and, although we may not be disposed to approve of all that was done and recognised by the Bishops assembled at this Council of Constantinople, the preponderance of sound argument, and ancient testimony, and Scripture proof, is decidedly with them, and against the second Nicene Council. We cannot dwell upon their several acts ; it will be sufficient for our purpose to quote their decree on the subject under consideration :—

“ Confirmed by these writings of God’s inspiration, and the sentiments of the blessed Fathers, and fixing our feet firm on the rock of worshipping God in spirit, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity, we being unanimous and of one sentiment, assembled together, with one voice decree, that every image, of whatever materials made, by the evil art of painters, is to be cast away from the Church as strange and abominable. Let no one, whoever he be, hereafter follow so unholy and impure a practice. And whoever from this day shall dare to procure for himself an image, or to worship it, or to set it up either in the church or in a private house, or to keep it in secret, if he be a bishop or deacon, let him be deposed ; if he be a hermit or layman, let him be visited by anathema, and subjected to the imperial laws, as one who sets himself against the divine decrees, and does not observe the ordinances.” *

These decrees were violently opposed by a large number through the Eastern empire, so deeply had the deplorable superstition struck its root ; but especially did the monastic ecclesiastics rage against it. Constantine, however, persevered in his maintenance

* See Second Nicene Council, act. vi.

of the primitive worship to his death, which did not take place for twenty years after this council. He was succeeded by his son, Leo IV., A. D. 775, who followed his father's steps in his opposition to the growing superstition. This unhappy man was carried off by a sudden death, A. D. 780. It is said he died by poison, administered by the machinations of his wife, Irene; but whether this be so or not, we cannot pronounce. His widow, however, and her son, then a boy, reigned conjointly. From the last hour of Leo the cause of image-worship became more and more triumphant. A close alliance was formed between these joint sovereigns and the Pope; and in the year 786 they summoned that second Nicene Council, which decreed for the use, and the honour, and the worship of images, and to the transactions of which we have already at some length directed the attention of the reader.

We cannot leave this point without adverting to the very unwise, unsound, and unchristian arguments by which Cardinal Bellarmin would persuade us that the supporters of image-worship were approved by Heaven, while its adversaries incurred God's heavy displeasure; and hence, that images were, on Divine authority, to be retained and worshipped in Christian churches. We may first observe, that the last three of his ten arguments in behalf of images are these:—

8. That the opponents of images were either Jews or Samaritans, or Mahometans, or heretics; whereas those who worshipped images were pious men, such as Popes Gregory and Adrian.

9. That the devil hates images; which Bellarmin proves by telling us, that once, on a hermit's complaining that his evil propensities continued with him to his old

age, the devil appeared to him, and pledged himself to depart from him, if the hermit would promise him never to worship the image of the Virgin Mary, which he had in his cell !

This story, quoted in evidence and with approval by Bellarmin, but most deservedly censured by Charlemagne, is twice cited at length in the second Council of Nice. Bellarmin does not refer to his authority, and certainly the records of that council, in relating the story, abound with sentiments disgusting and shocking, not only to a Christian mind, but to every one who has any regard for the commonest principles of decency and morality. The members of that council set their seal here to this monstrous tenet, that it is far better for a Christian to give himself to habits of the grossest sensuality, and to be guilty of perjury, than to neglect the worship of images. The story, with very slight variations, is repeated both in the 4th and 5th acts of that council, and is ascribed to "the holy Father Sophronius."*

"The Abbot Theodorus said, 'There was a certain recluse in the Mount of Olives, who struggled much, the devil attacking him by means of fornication. One day, when he pressed him very hard, the old man began to lament and say to the devil, 'How long will you not give up to me; depart from me henceforth; you are growing old with me.' The devil appeared to him visibly before his eyes, saying, 'Swear to me that you will tell no one what I am about to say, and I will no longer fight with you;' and the old man swore to him thus: 'I swear by Him who dwelleth in the highest, I will not tell any one what you say.' Then said the devil, 'Do not worship this image, and I

* Tom. viii. pp. 902, 1031.

will no longer fight with you.' Now the image had the likeness of our lady the holy Mary, mother of God, carrying our Lord Jesus Christ. The recluse said to the devil, 'Let be, let me consider of it.' On the following day he communicated with the Abbot Theodorus, and when he came, he related the whole to him. And the old man said to the recluse, 'Verily, father, you were cheated in swearing to the devil; nevertheless, you have done well in telling it. It were better for you not to leave one brothel in this city unfrequented, than refuse to worship our Lord Jesus Christ with his own mother IN THE IMAGE.' The devil then appeared again to the recluse, and said to him, 'What is this? you wicked old man. Did you not swear to me that you would tell no one? and how could you tell it all to him who came to you? I tell you, wicked old man, you will have to be judged as a perjurer in the day of doom.' The recluse answered him, 'What I swore, I swore; and that I forswore myself, I know: but I perjured myself by my Master and Maker; but thee I do not hear.'"

The satisfaction and welcome with which the tale was heard by the members of the council would probably not prepare the reader to concur in the assertion of Bellarmin, that the supporters of image-worship were good and pious men, and their opponents vile and worthless.

"The most holy Constantine, Bishop of Constantia, in Cyprus, said, 'As golden necklaces, so are godly fathers, agreeing in the worship of images.'"

"John, the reverend monk, a priest, and representative of the eastern pontiffs, said, 'The passage of our father Sophronius intimates another thing, that it is expedient for one who has sworn to forswear him-

self, rather than keep his oath at all for the destruction of the sacred images.' And this we say since some at this day take refuge in their oath."

Tarascus and others confirm this view. We certainly are not led by these records to form any exalted estimate of the moral and religious standard of these supporters of image-worship. "You had better frequent every house of ill-fame in the city, than renounce the worship of the image." "You had better break your oath altogether, than keep it to the injury of image-worship." It is very melancholy to reflect on the excesses to which the corruption of the pure worship of the Almighty exposes its promoters.

10. The tenth argument urged by Bellarmin in behalf of images is founded on the misfortunes attending the opponents of images, and the prosperity of those who worshipped them, which he proceeds to establish thus:—

"In the time of Leo, after the images were burnt in Constantinople, a pestilence arose, which carried off three hundred thousand persons in that city. At the same time Leo lost his imperial power in Italy; and Ezides, King of the Arabians, who had ordered the images of the Christians to be broken, did not survive one year, though thirty years had been promised him by one who incited him to destroy them."

"In the time of Constantine Copronymus unheard of calamities befel the East. Earthquakes overturned great cities, and killed many thousands. So terrible a pestilence arose, that vineyards, orchards, wells, and other places, were not sufficient for the burial of the dead. And, to take away all doubt as to the cause of these evils, everywhere, at the same time, there were miraculously imprinted, as if with oil, little crosses on

the people's dresses, the sacred veils, and priests' garments ; for God willed to shew that he desired the image of the cross to be seen everywhere, which Constantine desired at that time to obliterate everywhere. Besides this, so horrible a cold followed, that the Pontus was frozen for a hundred miles, and the ice was thirty cubits thick, on which fell snow twenty cubits high ; and then came a thaw, and immense masses of ice, like great mountains or islands, were borne along with great force, and some struck against Constantinople, and overturned part of the walls and the neighbouring houses. And the same year such a drought followed that the rivers, fountains, and wells were almost all dry ; so that all understood and said that all these things took place because of the impiety which the enemies of images shewed towards God and His saints. Besides, the Emperor Constantine died in such a manner, as that he exclaimed that, while living, he was delivered to the burning of an inextinguishable fire ; whereas Pepin, and his son Charles, who joined the Roman pontiff in defending images, when advanced to their kingdom, lived and reigned most happily.”*

Such are the statements with which Cardinal Bellarmin finishes his defence of image-worship. We cannot but wonder how a man of his reputation could put forward such arguments, which, besides their intrinsic worthlessness, and impiety, and uncharitableness, may so easily and so unanswerably be retorted on his own Church by those who renounce it, and on Christianity itself by infidels. The ravaging of Christian Italy and the sacking of Christian Rome by the Goths, the taking of Jerusalem by the Saracens, and their victories

* *De Imag. Sanct.*, vol. ii. lib. ii. cap. xii.

over the fairest parts of Christendom, the conquest of the Christian Britons by the pagan Saxons, the miseries to which the converted Saxons were subjected by the cruelties of the victorious and pagan Danes, with unnumbered other instances of the triumphs of infidels over Christian states, besides the visitations of earthquakes, and pestilences, and storms, laying waste lands and towns in Christian countries, ought to have taught Bellarmin himself the impiety, and rashness, and uncharitableness, of interpreting the temporal visitations of Providence as denunciations of Heaven against Heaven's enemies, or temporal prosperity and success as proofs of a righteous cause, and of the Almighty's approbation.

Nay, even while this work was in preparation for the press, in the spring of 1847, a circumstance occurred at Bruges far more strikingly connected with image-worship than any of those calamities which Bellarmin and others cite as evidences of God's wrath against individuals who opposed image-worship. The author took much pains to ascertain the facts, and the case was this:—"The Abbé A. Margeedt, curé of the church of the Madelaine at Bruges, born at Haugleden in 1791, was in the very act of elevating the host in the mass, when the head of a statue of the infant Jesus, in the Virgin Mary's arms, being of stone, fell off and struck the head of the priest, who died in consequence three days after."

Now, could anything be more unwise, unjust, or uncharitable, than for us who condemn image-worship as against the Scriptures and primitive belief and practice, to point to this event as a judicial interposition of Providence, exercised for the very purpose of making known the Divine condemnation of image-worship?

But would such a reference of the death of this priest to the Almighty's displeasure be one whit more unwise, more unjust, or more uncharitable, than these wholesale ascriptions by Bellarmin of public and private calamities to the anger of God manifesting itself against the opponents of image-worship, by such visitations as the freezing of the Pontus, the subsequent drought, and the painful death of Constantine? Unnumbered instances both of prosperity attending the undeserving, and adversity pressing the most exemplary Christians, all the days of their life, forbid us to take upon ourselves the office of judge, which belongs to Omnipotence.

But we must hasten to the close. No sooner had the Pope received the decrees of the second Council of Nice, than he proclaimed them through the West, where they were met by a far stronger opposition than probably was anticipated. Councils in Paris, Mayence, Frankfort, and other places, were held, all the members of which, as it appears, were filled with amazement, grief, and indignation at so fearful an inroad on the purity and simplicity of Christian worship. But since much obscurity rests on the proceedings in these councils, we will not dwell on them. To one point, however, to which we referred in an early part of this work, of great and peculiar interest to us of the Church of Christ in England, we must here again revert, because, whatever doubts may be entertained as to some minute details, the broad outlines are indisputable.

A copy, not of the decrees only of the Greek Council at Nice, but of all its proceedings, the arguments used, the authorities cited, and the sentiments express-

ed, were forwarded to Charlemagne, who sent them on to England. Here, there is no doubt, they were received with horror, as urging an unscriptural and unchristian worship, to which the English Church had been hitherto a stranger. Alcuin, Charlemagne's preceptor, and the restorer of learning in France, was commissioned to write to that emperor, deplored the steps already taken, and urging him to rescue Christendom from so sad a calamity. Whether the Emperor was induced by these communications from our island, or by some other cause, certain it is that he held a council at Frankfort, at which two of the Pope's legates were present; and that council, while it reprobated the intemperate zeal of the Iconoclasts, and allowed the use of pictures for ornament and instruction to be retained in the churches, prohibited unequivocally any, the least, worship or religious reverence, to be shewn to them. Charlemagne sent an ambassador to the court of Rome, with a volume containing a very full and specific reprobation of all the proceedings of the second Nicene Council. Whether or not the words were written down by Charlemagne or at his desire, (and if so, whether, as is very probable, they contained the selfsame arguments which Alcuin brought with him from Britain, expanded perhaps and amplified,) certain it is that they were received by Pope Adrian as an official communication from Charlemagne, and that Pope undertook to reply to his objections. His reply is contained in a letter to Charlemagne, preserved in the History of the Councils; and whoever compares the two together, cannot but find valid objections urged by Charlemagne, answered by explanations and refinements on Adrian's part the most unsatisfactory, and arguments and illustrations used by that Pontiff which do not apply at all

to the point at issue. Especially will he find there passages quoted as the genuine productions of Basil, Athanasius, and others, which are beyond all question spurious, and of a much later date.*

And here it is worthy of remark, that, whereas Charlemagne had objected to the appeal by the second Council of Nice to the legend that our blessed Saviour sent a picture of Himself to Abgarus, as being without warrant of Scripture and apocryphal, Pope Adrian defends it, and quotes our Lord's supposed letter to Abgarus, in answer to that king's invitation that He would come to see him; whereas Adrian's predecessor, Gelasius, and a Roman Council, had condemned those two letters as spurious and apocryphal.† Many, however, consider that the letters now found in Eusebius‡ must not be deemed utterly unworthy of credit.

But arguments, however sound, could not stand up against the combined phalanx of Papal authority, the propensity of our fallen nature to superstition, and the interested exertions of ecclesiastics; and after a vain struggle on the part of those who loved the religion of the Gospel rather than the innovations of a corrupt and degenerate age, image-worship bore down all opposition, and was for ages triumphant in Christendom.

* Conc., vol. viii. p. 1561.

† Book i. chap. xiii.

‡ Conc. Rom. Sec. Paris, A. D. 1621, p. 1263.

CONCLUSION.

SECTION I.

IN bringing to a close the present inquiry into the nature and tendencies of image-worship in the Church of Rome, it may be well briefly to recapitulate the points which we consider to have been established.

It has then been shewn that the religious worship of any material or visible representative of an absent object of adoration, is contrary to the letter and the spirit of the holy Scriptures both of the Old and of the New Testament. We have also seen that the worship of any image representing the Deity, or our blessed Saviour as God and man, or any saint, or angel, or the Virgin Mary, is contrary to the doctrine, and discipline, and practice of the Christian Church for more than seven hundred years.

In tracing the history of the Church, under this head, we have been brought to the conclusion, that, through the first three hundred years,* no images of any kind were suffered to be placed in the Christian churches, though the decree of the Council of Eliberis, forbidding their admission, “lest the object of worship might be painted on the walls,” implies that the practice was even

* For a fuller and a very interesting confirmation of these points, see Bingham's *Antiquities*, book viii. chap. viii. sect. vi. vii. viii., &c., and the various conclusive authorities there cited by him.

then beginning. Through the next four hundred years the portraits not only of saints departed, but also of living members of the Church, together with historical paintings representing events recorded in holy Scripture, (such as Abraham offering his son,) and also the persecutions and deaths of Christian martyrs, were admitted into the churches ; but no religious worship was on any account whatever allowed to be paid to any such image. So late, at all events, as the end of the sixth century, Pope Gregory the Great, who strenuously maintained the usefulness of having pictures for instruction-sake, no less strenuously insisted, by all means, on the universal prohibition of their worship. For this purpose he urged (what indeed was in itself most natural and conclusive, but what proves now, in consequence of the decrees of the second Nicene Council, to have been most remarkable and important) that the holy Scripture forbids worship being paid to anything made with hands, citing these very words, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.”

After many struggles against the use and worship of images through the greater part of the eighth century, that second Council of Nice, A. D. 794, convened by the Empress mother Irene, and her son Constantine, at the urgent instance of Pope Gregory’s successor, Adrian, both decreed that images must not only be used and honoured, but must also be worshipped. At the same time the council condemned with bitter anathemas as well those who should refuse to worship images, as any who should apply to them the prohibitions found in Scripture against idols, (the very thing which Pope Gregory had done;) and, in proof of the lawfulness of worshipping images, the council cited the

very passage to which Gregory had appealed as conclusive against their worship !

The decrees of that council were forced upon the churches in the east and in the west of Christendom, by the united authority of the popes and of the religious houses, whose revenues were swollen by the conflux of worshippers to the shrines of such images as were believed to be possessed of miraculous powers. Great resistance, indeed, was made in several parts to the introduction of this novel and heathenish worship, especially in our own country; yet the superstition grew and prospered, and for centuries triumphed over the pure worship of apostolic and primitive times. The poisonous fruits of this corruption, too pleasant to the taste of our fallen nature, are described by various writers; and our attention has been especially fixed by Polydore Vergil on the deplorable extent to which the evil had spread on every side at the close of the century before the Reformation. To this we may add the testimony of Erasmus, who, though he by no means desired the entire removal of images, yet tells us, that whereas for ages it was thought an abominable thing for a painted or graven image to be seen in a Christian church, in his day the use of images had not only increased beyond all bounds, but had lost sight of decency! “We see,” he continues, “in our churches, what could not with decency be painted in porticos and taverns ”*

The Council of Trent, while it forbade revelling, profligacy, and excess in pilgrimages to images, and prohibited the ascription of new miracles to old images, and the introduction of new images into churches without episcopal authority, and denounced all base gains

* Erasm. Epist., lib. xxxi. epist. xlvi. (London, 1642) p. 2064.

from that source, decreed that images must by all means be had and retained in churches, and that due honour is to be paid to them, appealing at the same time to the second Nicene Council for the assertion, that the honour paid to an image is passed on to the prototype, and authoritatively pronouncing that difference to exist between idol-worship among the heathen, and image-worship among Christians, which has been shewn in the course of this work to be groundless, imaginary, and contrary to the fact.*

On the nature of the worship or adoration paid to images in the Church of Rome, and held to be of right due to them, we have seen how various and irreconcilable are the opinions and doctrines of Romanist teachers, and how contradictory they are, not only to each other, but, in some cases, to the authorised services of the Church of Rome. The opinions, and arguments, and doctrines, and rubrics, and religious acts and ceremonies, and prayers which demonstrate this point, are placed parallel to one another in the Preface to this work.

SECTION II.

But we are still met by assurances from many quarters, that the members of the Church of Rome do not, and need not pray to the cross or images, or adore them, or pay them religious worship, or give praise to them. Indeed, since this work has been in the press, the author has been repeatedly informed, that Roman Catholics, in their arguments with those who urge image-worship as an essential corruption in the Church of Rome, and also in their representations to those whom they attempt to withdraw from the Church of England, still

* See *supra*, p. 46.

assert strongly and indignantly, that (whatever might have been the case in former times) image-worship is not only left an open question among them now, but, so far from being exacted as one of their terms of communion, is not even sanctioned by the Roman authorities of the present day. They confess that they think images useful, and that they pray before them to keep their thoughts from distraction ; but they reiterate their assurance that this is the very utmost, and that they worship with religious adoration neither cross nor image.

Now, when our words might carry with them the appearance of charging others, even by indirect implication, with duplicity and want of good faith, we ought to weigh carefully what expressions we employ ; and we will not here intentionally give unnecessary offence to any one. To our own Master we all stand or fall. But that blessed Master's truth is of too inestimable value, for those who are possessed of it to shrink from its defence under the influence of a morbid delicacy. We must not be driven from our purpose by an apprehension lest we raise suspicions of the full integrity and honesty of others, or lest we excite a surmise that what were once called pious frauds may still be deemed justifiable, and employed in the cause of the Roman Church. We would not be guilty of a breach of charity, but we must allege what we have seen, and heard, and known ; and we leave to others the reconciliation of facts with the assertions of those who declare that the Church of Rome neither enjoins, nor requires, nor prescribes as expedient, nor even authorises or sanctions, the worship of images.

We cannot, then, but remember, that, while at the time of the Reformation assertions were over and over

again made, that, though the people in the Roman Church worship before images, yet they worship not the image, the celebrated Naclantus, a chief worker in the Council of Trent, "shining among the doctors and bishops there, as the day-star among the lesser luminaries," professed openly, that people said so ONLY FOR GREATER CAUTION-SAKE,* and that the faithful not only do worship, and must worship images, but that they must also adore each image with the selfsame adoration with which the original being, whose representation it is, is to be adored.

Again, we cannot forget, that even the present Bishop of Melipotamus,† Dr. Wiseman, assures us, "that the Council of Trent does not decree that we are obliged to use images; and that it only says that it is wholesome to have them, and that they must be treated with respect;" whereas that council does decree that we are bound to use them, and does not only say that it is wholesome to have them.

When, moreover, we find Bellarmin‡ drawing a distinction on the subject of image-worship between what may be openly and outwardly expressed in words, and what is to be regarded as the real truth and intrinsic matter of fact, we are involuntarily and of necessity put upon our guard. We are forced to entertain somewhat of circumspection and vigilance, and even suspicion, whenever we find the declaration of individuals (however prominent their character in the Church of Rome) to be at variance with the palpable teaching, and example, and worship of that Church itself, and with the tenets of her authorised and accredited, and even canonised doctors.

* Ed. Venice, A. D. 1567, p. 202.

† Vide supra, p. 57.

‡ Tom. ii. lib. ii. c. xxii.

How, then, does the case actually stand now with regard to image-worship in the Church of Rome? And how far are those matters of fact which are established beyond controversy consistent with that denial of the existence of image-worship to which we are adverting?

In the first place, whereas the second Nicene Council* insists upon the religious adoration of images, (those who framed its decrees asserting, that the man who pretends to honour the images, but refuses to worship them, convicts himself of hypocrisy,) that council is appealed to with approbation by the Council of Trent, in the sentence which asserts that the honour shewn to the images is passed on to the prototypes, and which recognises, as outward signs of such honour, the kissing of the images, the uncovering of the head, and the falling prostrate before them.†

In the next place, if it be not the real wish and intention of the Church of Rome at the present day to encourage image-worship, in what light are we to view the circulation of books which expressly vindicate, and directly encourage that worship? How, for example, is such a supposition compatible with spreading abroad, as the authorised English version of the Holy Scriptures, the Douay Bible, with notes and comments‡ which in express terms defend the use and adoration of images and crucifixes, and condemn, as maintainers of false doctrines, those who reject that use and adoration? And how is that supposition consistent with the general circulation of books such as we find in almost every language, encouraging the belief in the miraculous powers of images, and so promoting their worship?

* Vide supra, p. 20.

† Supra, p. 43.

‡ Supra, p. 102.

Again, we have seen that Thomas Aquinas* maintains, without any reservation or qualifying language, that the cross and the images of Christ are to be adored with the selfsame worship with which the faithful must adore the second Person in the ever-blessed Trinity, namely, with the supreme adoration of *latrīa*. Still Thomas Aquinas lived six centuries ago, and it will be said, Is it fair to force upon the Church of Rome of the present day doctrines which she may have long ago discarded, or at least suffered to remain dormant, and which, at all events, she has ceased to enforce or to maintain? To this we must simply reply, that we do not force the doctrines of Thomas Aquinas on the Church of Rome now, against her own mind and will. She herself renews every year, and publishes throughout the whole world, wherever her voice can be heard, her confession of the truth and soundness of his doctrines. He is no ordinary canonised saint; his festival is raised to an equality with the festivals of the four doctors of the Western Church; and on that festival the Church of Rome every year now not only prays to him for his intercession in heaven, but actually prays to God for grace to enable her members to embrace with the understanding what Thomas Aquinas taught, and to fulfil, by their imitation, what he did; confessing in the same prayer, that the Almighty continues to enlighten the Church by the wonderful erudition of this same Thomas, and makes it fruitful by his holy operation. This, it must be borne in mind, is no obsolete confession and prayer; it is contained in the Roman Breviary now, and is commanded to be offered annually on the 7th of March, even to this very day.

* Vide supra, p. 63.

In the next place, Bonaventura* as positively maintains, that "the image of Christ is to be adored with the adoration of *latria*, because it represents Him who was crucified for us, and the image presents itself for Him." He also teaches, not less peremptorily, that "Every cross is to be adored with the adoration of *latria*;" that is, the highest conceivable worship, due only to the one supreme God.

Here, again, it may be asked, Is it fair to bind the present members of the Church of Rome, and that against their repeated protestations, to such doctrines as these, the author of which has for so many centuries been removed from this world. We reply, How such protestations can be reconciled with professions of full, loyal, and unreserved allegiance to the See of Rome, we must leave those who make them to shew, to the satisfaction either of their own conscience, or of those whom they would convince. But here again we must say, that, though Bonaventura died so many years ago, yet two centuries after his death he was canonised by Pope Sixtus IV., (the Pope, as Bellarmine teaches, being infallible in the act of canonisation,) and was then pronounced to have so written on divine subjects that the Holy Spirit seemed to have spoken in him. Nor only so; a century after his canonisation, Pope Sixtus V. pronounced Bonaventura to be an acknowledged doctor of the Church; and directed his authority to be cited, and employed in all places of education, and in all ecclesiastical discussions and studies: and these decrees of the Church of Rome remain in full force to the present hour.

In England, too, we cannot forget, that, somewhat more than a century before the Reformation, by the

* *Vide supra*, p. 64.

decrees of the Council of Oxford,* whoever should either teach or insinuate anything against the adoration of the cross, or against the veneration of images by processions, kneelings, bowings, incensings, kissings, oblations, burning of lights, pilgrimages, or any other accustomed mode, was pronounced to be guilty of heresy, and condemned to suffer the punishment of a heretic and one relapsed, which, in those days, was to be burnt alive. The laws of England have repealed what was called "the statute of burning;" but those decrees of the Roman Catholic Church in England were still in force at the Reformation. And yet we are told, that "(according to the judgment in which Roman Catholic doctors and divines are agreed) it is to be laid down as a principle, that images are to be reckoned among things indifferent."† But, from the days of the Reformation to the present, history, and our own experience and knowledge, assure us, that what were the doctrines and practices as to image-worship then, the same have they continued throughout. Those doctrines and practices, as Naclantus informs us, were denied by some even in his day, "FOR GREATER CAUTION-SAKE;" and so are they denied by some now; yet, as then, so now, they are really in existence, and must continue to exist, till Rome changes her laws and her liturgies.

Volumes have appeared one after another from time to time, and the press is yet teeming with them, recounting the miracles wrought by images in the several countries of the world; one image being represented as having been set up against another as a rival, and the faithful as flocking for the purposes of

* *Vide supra*, p. 70.

† See Milner's *End of Controversy*, Letter xxxiv.

religious adoration to one image rather than another. The Council of Trent, indeed, says, that the honour is to be paid to the image, not on account of any intrinsic power or virtue believed to reside in it. But, if the people are encouraged in the belief that prayers before one image will be effectual, which before another would be uttered in vain, what must be the practical inference? It may not, indeed, be believed by them that the hand of the sculptor, the painter, the silversmith, or brass-founder, by the act of making the image, imparted to it any power, nor that any occult working of nature endued the image with a new and intrinsic virtue; but it will inevitably be suggested that the Almighty has deigned to invest one image with an influence and authority which He has withheld from another.

How any distinction can be maintained between the miraculous images of the heathen world of which we read in ancient mythology, and in the fabulous histories of pagan Rome, on the one hand, and, on the other, those miraculous images of the Virgin Mary with accounts of which the press abounds at this day in all countries in communion with Papal Rome, we cannot see. Surely the Romanists, when they pray to the blessed Virgin or to her husband, do not so pray on the idea that those children of Adam possess any intrinsic virtue or excellence, beyond what their Creator has been pleased to bestow on them; and yet they do pray to Mary and Joseph, as persons having ears to hear, and a will to grant or refuse the request. We do not see how the assertion, that no intrinsic excellence or merits of its own reside in the image, can affect the question of worshipping it: and, on the same principle, we cannot admit the attempted distinction

urged by the Council of Trent between the worship of idols by the heathen, and the worship of images in the Church of Rome. Had the heathen believed not only that all the sanctity of the image, before which they worshipped, was imparted to it by the supreme Divinity, but that even the unseen being represented by the image originally derived its divine essence from the same source, that belief would not have cancelled the idolatry of their worship.* The images of the Virgin and other saints, reported to have exercised miraculous powers, may be believed by their worshippers to have no intrinsic virtue, or excellence, or power in themselves, but only what the Almighty has been pleased to impart to them; and yet that belief does not render the worship of them one whit less unscriptural, unapostolical, unchristian.

And to what conclusion on the point immediately before us, namely, the real belief and practice of the Church of Rome, from the Reformation to the present day, do those publications lead us, which have been, and continue to be, circulated for the guidance and instruction of the members of that Church? The nature of this treatise neither requires nor admits of any wide enumeration of such works; but we trust what we here briefly bring before the reader will be sufficient.

In the years 1657 and 1663 (not to go farther back than the last two centuries) Octavius Cajetan, a Jesuit, published two works, one on "The Lives of Sicilian

* On this subject, in addition to the evidence drawn from Augustine, Ambrose, Lactantius, and others, in chapter ii. part ii. of this work, (p. 51,) the reader is referred especially to the evidence of Arnobius the African, who was the preceptor of Lactantius, p. 135, and to Origen, p. 131, especially the clause printed in small capitals.

Saints," and another on "Certain Images of Mary, the Mother of God."* The latter contains much of what had already appeared in the former; and both abound with evidence of awful superstitions, and are full to the overflow with proofs that the Church of Rome then countenanced, throughout the countries subject to her control, the same belief and practice which she had long before sanctioned in her adoption of the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas, a sanction which she annually repeats in her public worship on the festival of his anniversary. We have room only for one or two specimens, by no means extreme cases, out of a multitude (the miraculous images enumerated being themselves not less than forty):—"To this Virgin" (so they call the individual image, not saying "to this image of the Virgin," but "to this Virgin") "the people flocked in 1479; and she relieved the city from a plague; and, consequently, in all their difficulties, especially when in want of rain, they have recourse TO THIS VIRGIN."

The following is recorded in both the above works of this author:—

"An image† of the Virgin was painted on the wall of a church at Palermo; a gambler, in a fit of madness in consequence of his losses at play, entered the church and pierced the image with a dagger. Instantly the Virgin's countenance, and the child's, whom she held in her arms, turned from red to white, and continued so. The man had not power to stir from the spot, and, being seized, was condemned to instant death. As he was being borne off to execution, a stone of its own accord sprang forth in the wall; and to this stone he was hung. Many miracles followed;

* Panormo, 1663.

† Vol. ii. p. 292.

since the people flocked to the *worship of the image*, and to implore succour."

We find that instances of these miracles, which must engender and spread the belief, that a living, though unseen being, of human feelings, and miraculously possessed of flesh and blood, inhabits the image, are published most industriously to this very day.

In 1707* a work was put forth, "with all necessary licences," containing an account of "the miraculous images of the blessed Virgin Mary venerated in Portugal, and through its dependencies." This work fills no less than ten octavo volumes, recording innumerable miracles of every kind, said to have been wrought by the Madonna's images, which were in consequence frequented and worshipped, each in proportion to the popularity gained for itself by the number and character of the miracles ascribed to it.

But, however many proofs of the same fact we may be able to cite through the intervening years of the last century, the superstitious tales as to the miraculous operations of images, and the doctrine of the worship due to them, and acknowledgments that such worship is actually paid to them, seem to have been greatly revived within the last twenty years; and since we are more concerned and interested in ascertaining what is now taught and spread, than we are in reviewing the erroneous teaching of a more distant period, we will confine ourselves to some instances with which we are supplied within the limits of that time.

In the year 1827 a work was published at Rome, with the Pope's licence, which was intended to be a sort of guide, or hand-book, for strangers visiting Rome

* Santuario Mariano. Lisbon, 1707.

and its neighbourhood. In this work we are supplied with the following information with regard to the “Church of St. Mary of Victory.” “Paul the fifth” [pope of that name] “erected this church in 1605, in honour of St. Paul the Apostle, and gave it to the barefooted Carmelite fathers. It afterwards took the title of St. Mary of Victory, in consequence of the divers victories gained by the Catholics over the heretics and Turks, by means of THE INTERCESSION OF THE MADONNA’S IMAGE, which is WORSHIPPED above the great altar, and which is wholly adorned with precious stones.”*

Here the victories gained over the heretics and Turks are ascribed, to the intercession not of the Virgin Mary herself, but of that image of her which is worshipped upon the high-altar.

This work,† though otherwise and in itself perhaps of not much authority, becomes of great importance from its having been sent forth, as we find in the commencement, “with privilege,” in Rome, where was no liberty of the press, and where nothing could be published unauthorised by the Pope; and also from its having obtained authority (as is stated at the close) to be republished.

In a work (to which we refer also in the Preface) published at Florence ten years nearer to the present day, of which both the title and the matter shew that its object is to spread and inculcate, especially on the rising generation, the present doctrines of the Church of Rome, we read in plain language the same doctrine on

* Vol. i. p. 347.

† The title of the work is, “Itinerario di Roma et delle sue Vicinanze; compilato, secondo il metodo di M. Vasi, da A. Nibby, pubblico professore di Archæologia nell’ Universite di Roma, 1827.”

image-worship which Thomas Aquinas, and Bonaventura, and Naclantus, with many others of her celebrated doctors, have constantly held. After expressly enumerating the various kinds of religious worship, specifying *latria* due to God, *hyperdulia* to the Virgin, and *dulia* to the saints, this catechism, called Christian Doctrine, puts forth the following questions and answers:—

“*Q.* Ought we to pay any adoration at all to the image of Christ, or the Virgin, or the saints?

“*A.* If we consider them only in themselves as a sacred and blessed thing, we shew to them that respect only which we feel towards sacred and blessed things; but, considered as the representative of a holy being, we ought to adore them with the same kind of adoration with which we adore the holy being whom they represent.

“*Q.* Why in such case ought they to be adored with the adoration with which the holy being whom they represent is adored?

“*A.* Because that adoration is passed on to the holy being himself.”*

In the middle of the seventeenth century a work was published by William Gumpenberg, called “Mary’s Atlas,” which professed to be a description “of all her MIRACULOUS images WORSHIPPED in every part of the world.” In 1839 a Veronese priest began to republish it, having added “the latest images which wrought wonders,” to the end of the eighteenth century. This work, dedicated to the Empress of Austria, has at present reached six volumes, (the last, in the British Museum, being published in 1842,) and already contains

* Dottrina Christiana, (Fiorenze, 1837,) p. 35.

an account of one hundred and ninety-three miraculous images.* To what extent the work must be carried it is impossible to form an estimate; for, although its title promises to embrace all the miraculous images of the Virgin worshipped through the whole world, and begins with Europe, yet the six volumes have reviewed only a part of Italy, and have not touched upon any other country.

While the above work was in the course of publication, another was begun on the same subject at Milan, entitled "The History of the most celebrated Shrines of the most holy Mary, scattered throughout the Christian world." At the close of the third volume there is a notice, that the further publication of the work is suspended for the present by unforeseen causes. This work is full of the same sort of miracles, the frontispiece representing "the image of our Lady of Ardesio in the act of her appearing." This miraculous appearance of the Madonna, with as many other wonders as the three volumes can contain, is described at length in the body of the work.†

In 1844 ‡ a priest of Paris published "The History of the miraculous Image of our Lady of Good Deliverance." A few extracts from this work will shew what views the author considers to be already adopted by his readers, or such as he wishes them to entertain. The statue is black, and for a motto is quoted in Latin the passage from the Song of Solomon, "I am black, but comely."

In the early part of his work the author speaks thus: "Most of the miraculous statues of Mary are black. This statue represents the Virgin of a black colour, holding the infant Jesus on her left arm, and

* Verona, 1839-42. † Milan, 1840, 8vo. ‡ Paris, 1844.

it is invoked under the title of our Lady of Good Deliverance. This image is enriched by many votive offerings—hearts of gold and silver—which are emblems of the moral cures wrought by the invisible consoler of the afflicted, and which are an authentic pledge of the gratitude of those whose prayers she has heard in the day of trial. What, then, is the origin of that statue? On what is founded the worship paid to it?"*

"This church was renowned for a pious pilgrimage. There was seen the statue of the Virgin of a black colour, which was honoured under the affecting title of our Lady of Good Deliverance, and which had become the object of the devotion of the faithful, in consequence of the singular graces of which it was the instrument."†

Entering upon the history of the image at the commencement of the Revolution, the author says—

"Mary, on her side, more than once herself admonished her faithful servants to prepare themselves for the time of trial. In various places her images were seen shedding tears, opening and shutting their eyes. In one community of Paris a statue of the Virgin, from old time an object of devotion, announced by its tears the most bloody crises of the Revolution, and especially the punishment of the unhappy Louis XVI. This supernatural phenomenon shewed itself in other countries. At Ancona, at Rome, and in various towns of Italy, at the approach of the revolutionary armies, the images of Mary which were worshipped in the churches and public places were seen to shed abundant tears in the presence of the astounded multitudes."‡

The Pope, in 1805,§ granted a plenary indulgence to

* Page 6.

† Page 8.

‡ Page 57.

§ Page 83.

all who should communicate in that church on certain days, provided an altar were decked there in honour of the Virgin.

Although the following sentence belongs rather to a former work on the worship of the Virgin, than to a work on the image-worship of the Church of Rome, it will not be thought out of place to quote it here. To our ears, though we have become familiar with the impious ascription to the Virgin of the redemption wrought by Christ alone, this passage still sounds awfully :—

“Consider Mary as in reality effecting our deliverance when she gave her consent to the incarnation of the Word ; and completing it, when on Calvary SHE OFFERED her divine Son for the salvation of the human race.”*

Surely the worshippers of Mary must rest their faith on another Gospel, and must have forgotten that Gospel which assures us, that God Himself sent His Son into the world, that the world through Him might be saved ; and spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.

In the following year (only two years ago) we find a book published in Vienna,† giving an account of the images of Mary in Austria, full of the same representations of which we have too abundant a supply from every quarter. Among other miracles, we are assured, that, in the year 1665, a man, who was not in communion with the Church of Rome, came into a church where was an image of the Virgin ; that he cut off the head of the image ; and that blood flowed. The chap-

* Page 82.

† Die Mariensagen in Oesterreich. J. P. Kaltenbaeck. Wien, 1845.

ter which recounts this is called* “The Story of the Holy Blood.”

When we find such legends as these in every country, asserting that images are endued with miraculous power, that they effect supernatural cures, turn pale, shed tears, open and shut their eyes, when wounded send forth a gush of blood, we are driven to question whether we are treading on Christian ground, or whether we are not reading of those fables of Greece and Rome which record that the images of Juno and of Apollo shed tears, the latter for three days and three nights; and that the altar of Neptune flowed with sweat; when, as the historian tells, the number of prodigies reported increased in proportion to the increased credulity and eagerness with which the reports were received.†

If we turn our thoughts from the mass of evidence supplied by the press, and either recall our own observations, or inquire of our contemporaries what is the result of their experience in various parts of Christendom, we arrive at no other conclusion than that to which the evidence of the press has brought us. If, indeed, what we witness had been contrary to the decrees, and public acts, and religious services of Rome, we might perhaps have lamented that greater vigilance was not exerted in repressing and discountenancing such superstitions as we see and know, but yet we should in fairness have acknowledged the Roman Church itself to be not answerable for them. When, however, we find the doctrines, the liturgies, and the public acts of that Church all conspiring to sanction and foster the principle of image-worship, in

* Page 104.

† Livy, lib. xl. cap. xix.; lib. xliii. cap. xiii.; lib. xxviii.

common justice we hold that Church itself responsible to God and man for the excesses of superstition in this department which meet our eyes and ears on every side. We have room only for one or two instances of the practices to which we are alluding.

At the west end of the cathedral of Munich is an image (at least it was there in 1842) with this prayer inscribed under it:—"Thou, who **ALONE** hast the power to bend the wrath of the eternal Deity, cover us, O Goddess! [or "Thou Divine One"] in thy Virgin bosom."

" Tu quæ sola potes æterni numinis iram
Flectere, virgineo nos tege, Diva, sinu."

Our present subject does not invite us to dwell on the awful impiety of this prayer, even were it addressed to the spirit of the Virgin herself; but to put the prayer before the eyes of every one who looks up to her image, is in the extreme a perilous approach (to say the least) to the fostering of idolatry.

In Rome, again, (the very citadel of the Roman faith,) in the streets and highways of the town, images of the Virgin are erected with this prayer inscribed under them, "O Lady, save thy people!" ("Salvum fac populum tuum, Domina!")—a sad parody on the Church's prayer to God, "O Lord, save thy people!" ("Salvum fac populum tuum, Domine!")

In these and similar instances, which abound through all those parts of Christendom in which Romanism is dominant and unrestrained, we find merely a continuance of that system which, in the story of "St. Mary of Egypt,"* would have us believe that, on finding

* That this story is a legend, resting on no credible evidence whatever, is proved in the volume entitled "Romish Worship of the Virgin," p. 387.

herself unable to enter into the Church of Jerusalem and worship the cross, she discovered an image of the Virgin Mary in the corner of an adjoining building, and offered this prayer, keeping her eyes fixed steadfastly on the image:—"Lady Virgin! I know myself unworthy to look upon an image of thee, most pure one! Help me who am in distress and without assistance, and command that an entrance be given me, that I may adore the holy cross." Upon which, we are told, all difficulty was removed, and, coming from the church, she knelt before "the mother of God, ever Virgin;" *i.e.*, says Dr. Wiseman,* "before her image."

But were we, for mere argument's sake, to dismiss from our thoughts all these considerations, still, as long as the Roman Pontifical, the Roman Breviary, and the Roman Missal remain as they are to this very day,† how can we give credence to those who say that the Roman Church does not require or sanction the worship of images?

That Roman Pontifical pronounces at this very day supreme divine adoration (*latria*) to be due to the cross, the material cross which the Pope's officer carries before him or his representative.

In that Roman Breviary prayers and praises to the cross are enjoined to be offered as solemnly and as imperatively, on May 3rd and September 14th, as are any other parts of divine worship. Let any one carefully and impartially weigh those prayers and praises, a portion of which it may be well to repeat here :

"Hail! O cross, our only hope! Do thou to the pious multiply grace, and for the guilty blot out their sins"

* Remarks on a Letter from Mr. Palmer, p. 27.

† Vide supra, pp. 83, 84, 85.

“O thou cross! do thou save the present congregation assembled for thy praise.”

“O thou venerable cross! thou who didst bring salvation to the miserable! with what heraldings shall I extol thee, since thou didst prepare life in heaven for us?”

“The King is exalted to the sky, while the noble trophy of the cross is ADORED by all the worshippers of Christ for ever.”

That Roman Missal enjoins on all her priesthood, and on the faithful among the laity after the priests, every Good Friday, to approach barefoot, and on their knees to adore the cross, the material cross of wood or of other substance, which the priest has then, in the presence of the people, uncovered, and fixed in front of the altar.

Here, in passing, we have the painful task of adverting to what can scarcely be regarded in any other light than a disingenuous suppression of the truth, and consequently, according to the universally received maxim, the suggestion of falsehood. A work was published at Rome in 1833, “Printed for the Foreign Catholic Library,” and dedicated to Cardinal Weld, the author being John England, the Roman Bishop of Charles-ton, for the express purpose of explaining to English travellers staying in Rome the nature and ceremonies of the mass, especially “the peculiar observances of the holy week.” In describing* the ceremonies of Good Friday, this work misleads the reader in two important particulars. In the first place, the heading of the section stating its contents is “Adoration of Christ crucified. Veneration of the Cross;” whereas the words in the Missal are throughout, not “The Adoration of Christ,”

but "The Adoration of the cross." Again, having described the proceedings, the writer says, "The performance of this ceremony is called 'The Adoration ;'" whereas it is over and over again called "The Adoration of THE CROSS," and never "The Adoration" only. Then follows the misleading assertion of the author : "Though the tokens of affectionate respect are given to the symbol, the homage of adoration is paid only to Christ." This has been said with regard to the worship of images from the time of the second Nicene Council, and the same was said by the heathen of their worship of idols.*

As long as these decrees, and acts of prayer and praise in public worship, remain, as they now remain, authorised, sanctioned, enjoined, and commanded by a ritual binding on all members of the Church of Rome, clerical and lay alike, we do not understand how any one can profess himself to be a real and consistent member of that communion, and at the same time either refuse to worship and adore images, or deny that the adoration of material objects is sanctioned and required by his Church. If, on days when the adoration of the cross is prescribed and ordered, such an one refuses to assist and join in that service, he disobeys the laws of his Church, and sets her authority at defiance ; and if he outwardly complies with the ordinances of his Church, he must either join in a service of which his conscience disapproves, or else he must be conscious that he is a member of a Church, one of whose terms of communion is a participation in the worship and adoration of images.

* *Vide supra*, p. 54.

SECTION III.

Before we conclude these reflexions on the image-worship of the Church of Rome, we would with all respect, but with all firmness, address a few words to each of two dissimilar classes in our own communion.

First, on those who may be importuned to renounce their allegiance to the Church of England, and take refuge in Rome, we would urge the imperative duty of examining thoroughly and repeatedly, sparing neither time nor pains, the reality of the doctrine and the discipline of the Church of Rome on the subject of image-worship. They will be told that even the use of images is not* enjoined, but only recommended as an useful and wholesome help to devotion, and that the charge of adoring them is an unfounded and malicious calumny; at all events, that the use of them is an open question, and will be left as a matter of religious indifference for the adoption or rejection of each convert individually. The very same statements and arguments which were made at the commencement of the present century by Dr. Milner, in his work entitled "The End of Religious Controversy," and which are still industriously circulated in new editions of that book, will be employed in every form best fitted to captivate the unwary. With all the tone of unbounded liberality of sentiment, a snare the most dangerous will be laid for the generous and confiding spirit of youth; and that snare will be so skilfully concealed under the most specious fallacies, that we cannot wonder if it should

* *Supra*, p. 57.

prove fatal to such as expose themselves to the wiles of the temptation, and dally with the tempter, before they have duly possessed themselves of the power of detecting the fallacies, and extricating themselves from the snare. Let us take, for example, a passage on the subject before us, contained in the 34th letter of that work. The writer says,* “It is a point agreed upon among Catholic doctors and divines, that the memorials of religion form no essential part of it. Hence, if you should become a Catholic, as I pray God you may, I shall never ask you if you have a pious picture or relic, or so much as a crucifix in your possession; but then I trust, after the declarations I have made, that you will not account me an idolater, should you see such things in my oratory or study, or should you observe how tenacious I am of my crucifix in particular.” To this passage Dr. Milner appends the following sentence by way of note:—“The learned Petavius says, ‘We must lay it down as a principle, that images are to be reckoned among things *adiaphora* (indifferent), which do not belong to the substance of religion, and which the Church may retain or take away as she judges best.’”†

How deceiving and misleading a guide is such a passage as this! how full is it of treacherous fallacy! The writer is one individual speaking to another individual; and, although what he says may be true as to the Church of Rome in her legislative character, yet, in the only sense in which it could apply to an individual, it is not true. To that Church, image-worship in the abstract may be a thing indifferent, and she might (but for the Council of Trent) withdraw her decrees concerning it at her pleasure; yet to an individual mem-

* Edit. 1842, p. 348.

† Lib. xv. De Incarn.

ber of that Church it is not a thing indifferent, and he cannot accept it or reject it at his pleasure. The Church of Rome herself is bound by the decrees of the Tridentine Council; and those decrees enact, that images are by all means to be retained, and to be treated with the veneration due; and till the decrees of that Council be reversed, and the Missal, Breviary, and Pontifical be reformed, — that is, till Rome herself be changed, — image-worship cannot become a thing indifferent; it is prescribed by the Church of Rome, and must be practised by every one who binds himself to pay dutiful allegiance to that Church.

Those who are tempted by such fair promises, and plausible statements, and extenuating representations, must be cautioned against the peril to which they expose themselves, if they give too hasty heed to them. Image-worship is not the only superstitious practice which persons, before their conversion, have been persuaded to regard as a thing indifferent, but the entire adoption of which, after they have been irretrievably taken captive, they have to their confusion found to be an indispensable condition of full communion with Rome. The worship of the Virgin Mary was lately so understood by one, who afterwards was dismayed by an authoritative announcement, that nothing short of the repetition of the entire Litany of the Virgin could be accepted as a passport to the receiving of the holy communion. It has come to the knowledge of the writer of these pages, that the mental distress and perplexity of several persons lately labouring under similar struggles are great in the extreme; and that their earnest entreaties that their friends would offer prayers at the throne of grace in their behalf are in the highest degree importunate

and affecting. May God enlighten and comfort them, bringing them back to the truth!

But, surely, before any one allows himself to be enticed to renounce his baptism in the Church of England, and to espouse Rome, with all that Rome imposes and exacts, it is his bounden duty to God and man, and to his own soul, to investigate the whole truth; not to dwell (as many have done to their bane) on the imperfections of his own communion, (knowing that imperfections are inseparable from everything, how divine soever, which is committed to human vessels,) nor, under plea of escaping from such imperfections, rashly to adopt a religion which may in some points shew more goodly to the sight, and be more fair to look upon, but which has a secret canker at the heart. On many, the discovery of that canker bursts suddenly and too late; and very few indeed, after discovering it, can summon strength of mind and courage enough to break off their fetters, to confess that they have been deceived, and to return to the fold which, in an evil hour, they deserted. The large majority are, before that discovery, inextricably entangled by the arts of Rome, which prove themselves far more potent than the fabled spells of the enchanter. The descent is easy, and many are seduced to tread the downward path of superstition: the return is of all things most difficult, and, but for the omnipotence of divine grace, might, indeed, be pronounced impossible.

To those among us, on the other hand, who are already adequately alive to the corruptions with which Romanism, through the lapse of ages, has overlaid the religion of our blessed Saviour, and who sensibly feel the peril of idolatry to which the superstition of image-worship exposes the soul, stealthily seducing it from

the simple worship, spiritual and primitive, of the Gospel, to a religion in which our fallen nature has mingled with pure Christianity much of the baneful poison of heathenism, we would urge a different consideration. On them we would affectionately impress the duty of not mistaking in themselves indignation and zeal against religious errors for a genuine and generous love of the truth, or for an exalted and purified devotion of the soul to heaven.

God's mercy has bestowed on us the blessing of a more primitive faith and of a more Scriptural Liturgy: we are indeed members of a Church more apostolical, and evangelical, than the Church to which those persons have strayed whose sad defection we lament. But the merciful privilege which we enjoy brings with it increased responsibilities. It well becomes us all to take good heed, lest even the worshippers of images, with all their errors, rise up in the judgment at the last, and condemn us. This they may do, if, with all our greater advantages, our faith do not approve itself as more stedfast and unfeigned; if our hope be not at once more sure and more purifying; if our charity be not more fervent and more comprehensive. They unhappily persuade themselves to have recourse (in aid, as they say, of their devotion) to those innovations and superstitions, which we discard as unjustifiable, unworthy and distrustful inventions of degenerate human nature, in the holiest of man's duties, where the gracious Founder of our faith has Himself provided for us whatever is necessary for the soul's well-being and its progress towards heaven. For this they may obtain pardon, because Omniscience may pronounce them to have persevered in their superstition ignorantly in misbelief. But how shall we escape either the displeasure

of Almighty God, or the censures of our own conscience, if, with all the appliances of the Gospel provided for our use, spiritual and heavenly as they came fresh from the Divine treasure-house, neither bound by the shackles of superstition, nor checked by the corruptions of man's device, we do not shew forth His praise by a more ardent piety and a more holy life? How can we satisfy our duty to our heavenly Benefactor, and to His Church, the keeper and witness of the truth, if we do not honestly, yet humbly, give proof of the scriptural and primitive integrity and holiness of our principles, by a more steady and calm, and at the same time a more zealous and energetic devotion of our whole selves, body, mind, and spirit, to the work of our heavenly Master, which, indeed, is none other than the work of our own salvation? How can we become or continue an acceptable people in His sight, unless we strive, by prayer and self-denial, and the best exertion of every faculty, as long as it is His good pleasure that we sojourn here, to increase daily in his Holy Spirit more and more, having our conversation daily more and more in heaven, and, as we walk with God on earth in faith, and hope, and love, conforming ourselves daily more and more to the likeness of His ever-blessed Son, "the image of the invisible God"?

THE END.

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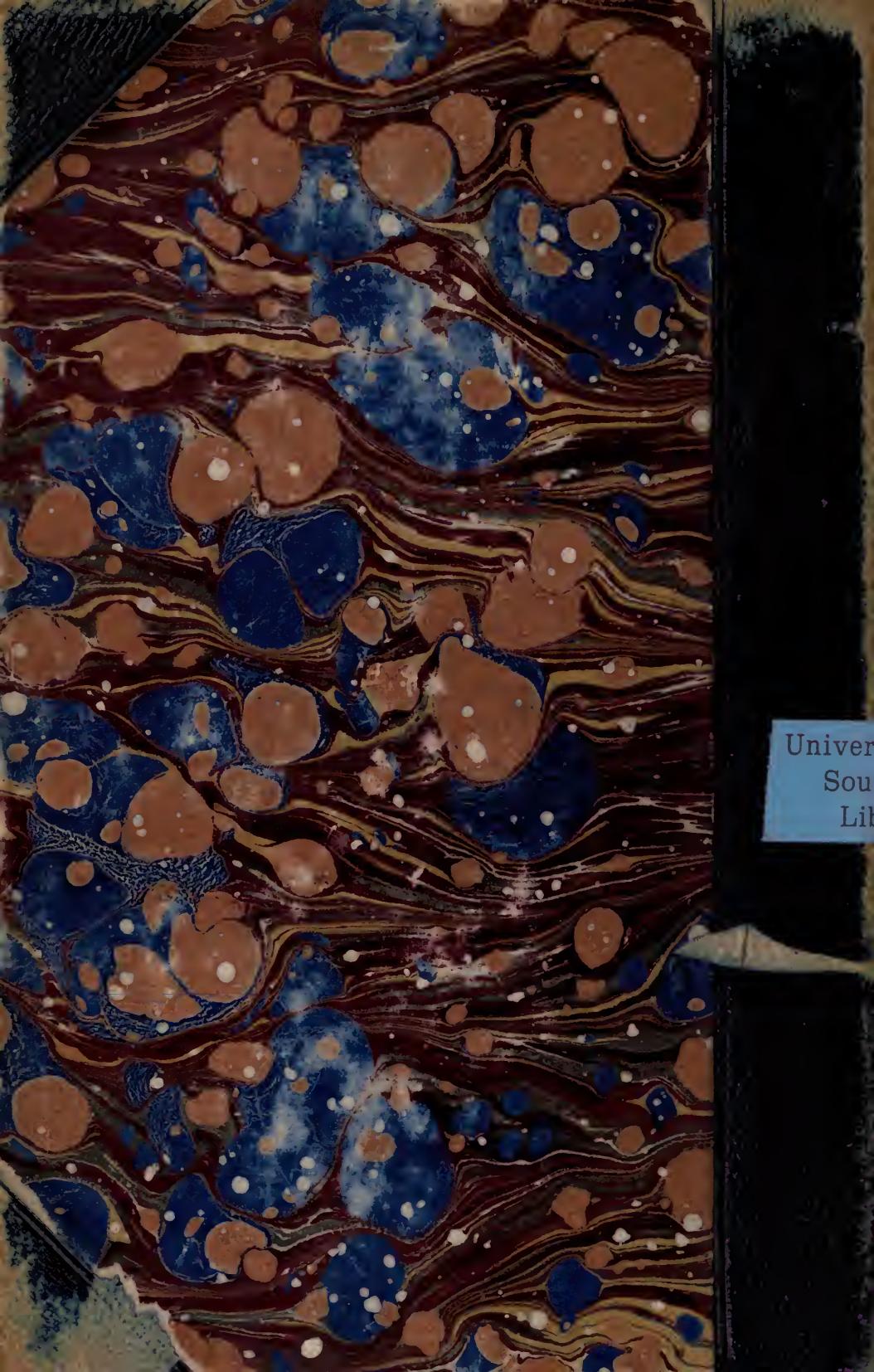


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